THE TEXTILE ART MAGAZINE

embroidery

Bright ideas
LIBBY ASHDOWN

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Preview of 2023

A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN
Liz Cooksey

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PIPPA HAYNES

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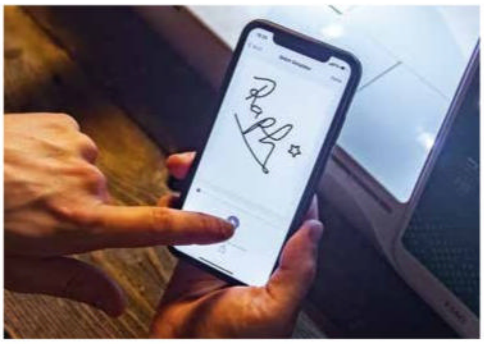

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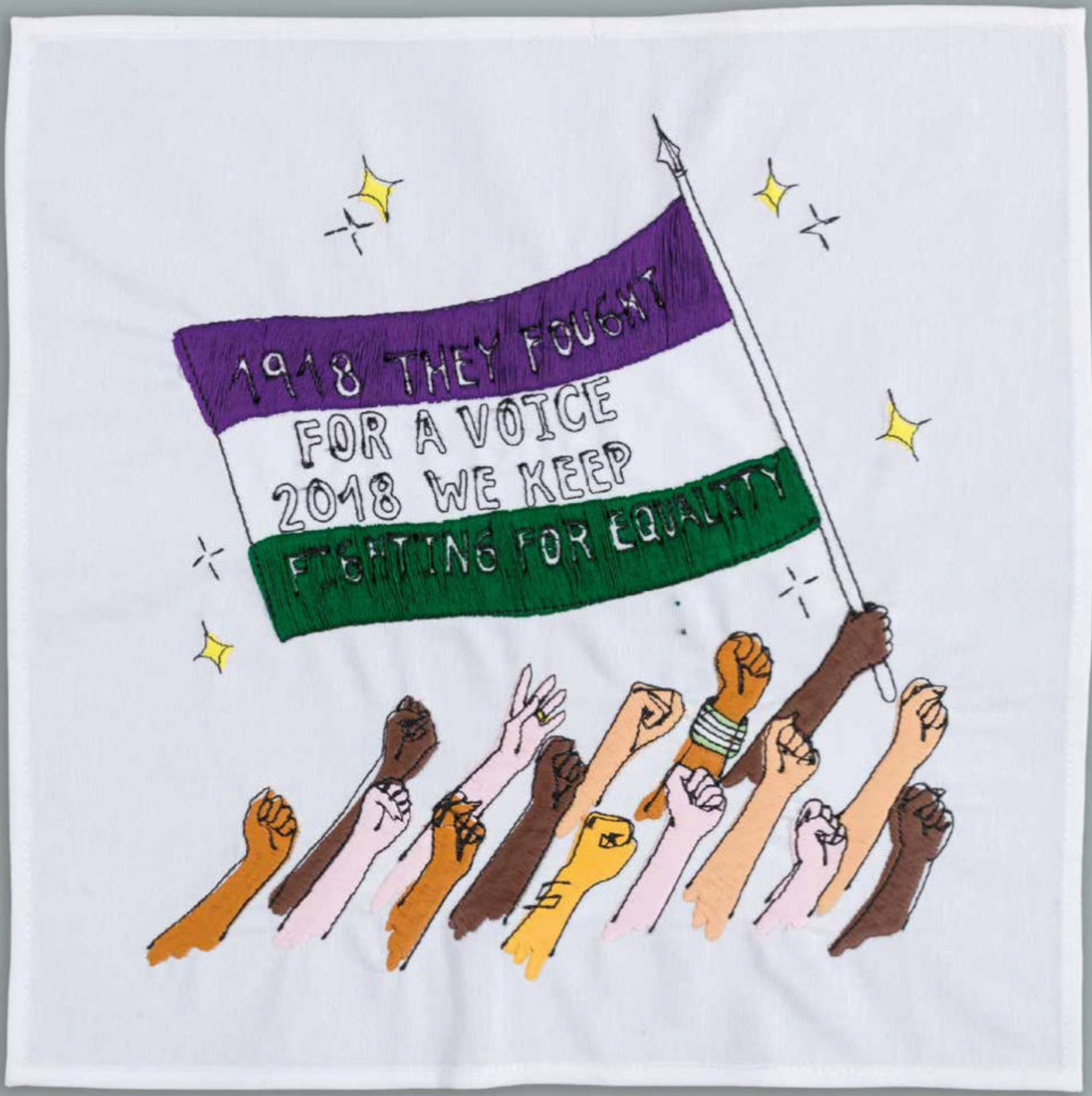

Motive / Motif:

Artists Commemorate the Suffragettes

Ghada Amer, Chila Burman, Anthony Burrill, Jo Cope, Dorothy Cross, Phoebe English, Molly Goddard, Mona Hatoum, Charlotte Hodes, Anne Howeson, Peter Kennard, Sarah Lucas, Heather Phillipson, Celia Pym, Daniel Ramoso, Anila Rubiku, Francesca Smith, Helen Storey, Sage Townsend and Rachel Whiteread.

Curated by Charlotte Hodes and Alison Moloney.

The significance of the image on the handkerchief goes far beyond this modest embroidered object.

Its beauty belies the women's struggle and suffering whilst revealing their bond with the embroidered word.

Gallery 2, 14 January 2023 – 16 April 2023

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image: Borja Moronta, courtesy of the artist.

from the editor

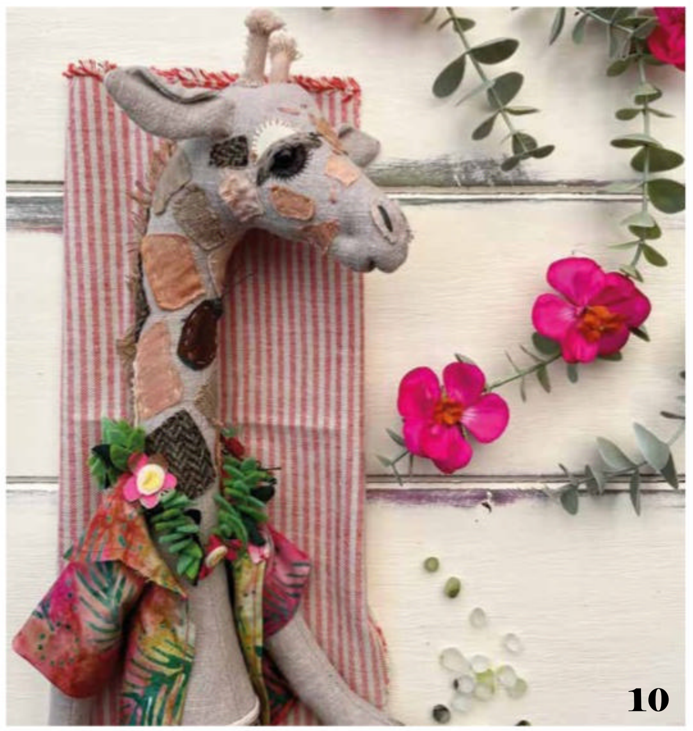
■ Welcome. As winter trudges back into our lives, the Christmas presents have been stowed away, the dog rescued from his bow tie/party hat/reindeer antlers, and the Roses or Quality Street have all but gone, we aim to brighten things up. Which is why we have opted for glorious colour for our front cover, to tell the tale of an ancient art *and* craft called passementerie (meaning elaborate trimmings), being brought into sharp focus for contemporary interiors by a one-woman weaving sensation with pots of colour inspiration.

In stark contrast, we also managed to catch up with Ukrainian textile artist Anastasiia Podervianska, who reports that artists in her country are continuing to voice their opinions through their work, and are busy arranging art fundraisers for their army. *Air Alarm Map*, below, is Anastasiia's woven version of the map that pings up on Messenger warning citizens where life is most at risk. Anastasiia calls it the 'bloody map' – red all over, apart from occupied Crimea. Read the short article on page 56. We hope the new year can bring some relief for all those suffering in war-torn areas and that one day soon daily life can resume.

Finally, in a shameless plug, if you enjoy your copy of *Embroidery*, do think about getting a subscription delivered straight to your door or device. Our print subscription plus archive gives you access to every single issue and has a great online search function so you can find stories about all your favourite artists. Enjoy!

Claire

Claire Waring
EDITOR
Embroidery magazine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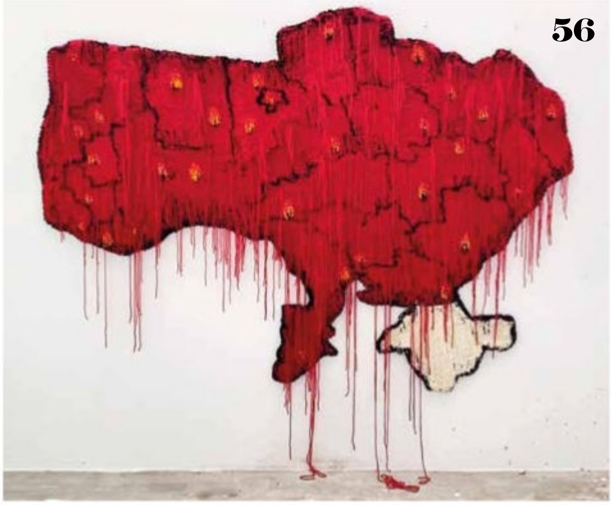
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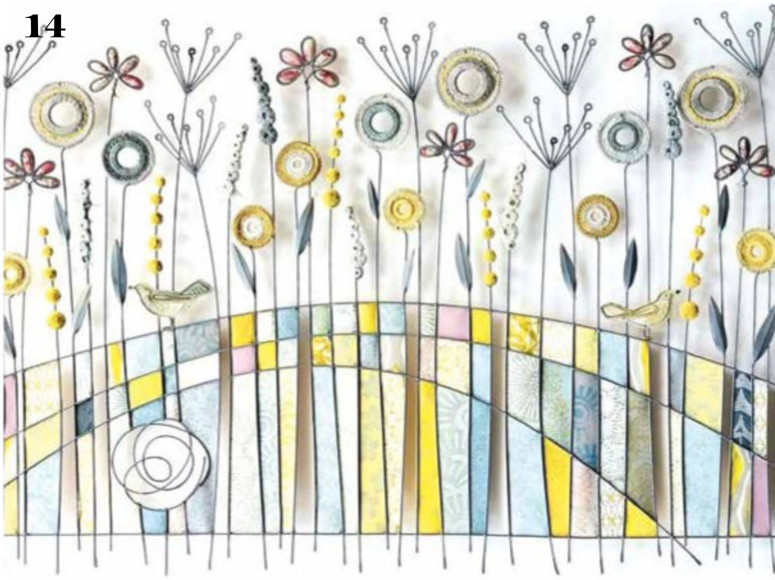
ON THE COVER: Libby Ashdown is saving the ancient art and craft of passementerie by making it relevant to modern life


14

embroidery

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EMBROIDERYMAGAZINE.CO.UK

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contents january february 2023

36

32

front

07 EMBROIDERY LOVES
The art of nostalgia

08 NEWS
Some stories to take note of

09 GUILD GRADUATES
Two to watch

10 FRESH TALENT
Ella Kearvell's art dolls

12 PREVIEW OF 2023
A riot of new exhibitions jostling for your attention

20

16

features

14 THE SEWING ROOM
'A room of one's own' has special significance for Liz Cooksey whose kitchen table making competed with feeding three hungry boys, but now she finally has her own ordered space.

16 SCULPTURES IN THREAD
Pippa Haynes of Lemon Pepper Studio, married to a farmer, lives by the seasons and her exquisite art and stitch kit creations follow suit.

20 IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU BLUSH
Victoria McIntosh uses big knickers to create some arresting artworks.

22 CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR
Robin McCarthy addresses some of the biggest issues of the day through her art, such as racism, gun-crime and the environment.

26 OF LIFE AND DEATH
Mourning the loss of her husband, Kate Tume started making death masks in brilliant hues, helping her cope with her grief.

32 COVER: BRIGHT IDEAS
Libby Ashdown, who practises the ancient art of passementerie, is something of an endangered species, but is making passementerie relevant to modern-day life through eye-popping colour.

36 CATCHING UP WITH ANNE KELLY
Anne Kelly reflects on the art of necessity that we encountered during lockdowns and how that affected her artworks.

40 FIRST PERSON: SALLY SPINKS
Sally Spinks writes of her Random Acts of Kindness series, sure to enchant, and her work on the now ubiquitous tattoo.

42 IN HIGH SPIRITS
Karolina Dworska chats to Woo Jin Joo about her work on the 'Dokkaebi' or Korean goblin.

46 MATERIAL MATTERS: LILIAN DRING
After a serendipitous trip to the Southbank Centre where she discovered The Patchwork of the Century, June Hill researches its makers.

48 COLOSSAL CROSS-STITCH
Raquel Rodrigo's street art cross-stitch, in giant form, is quite the thing on the continent.

52 OUR 'LABEL CULTURE'
Joy Pitts brings pointed meanings to her work.

56 UKRAINIAN WAR ART
Anastasiia Podervianska on working in Ukraine.

26

reviews

39 BOOKS
The Letters of Rosemary and Bernadette Mayer, 1976-1980
On Mending by Celia Pym

51 OUT AND ABOUT

EXHIBITIONS

54 Preview: National Gallery masterpiece tour: *Tobias and the Angel*
55 The Singh Twins: Slaves to Fashion
57 Magdalena Abakanowicz: Every Tangle of Thread and Rope

58 WHAT'S ON

24

7

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the art (and joy) of nostalgia

■ SISTERS JO AND SUE THOMAS almost think and act as one when it comes to running their business. They set up Made by Swimmer about eight years ago. With its wealth of creature characters offering vintage vibes in bucketloads, and their reuse-recycle-reduce ethic, they have seen their Etsy sales rise rapidly. The rush began, as for so many, with the lockdown boost to business and this year they have operated an order book for their most popular designs. Sales are concentrated in the USA and UK, with the target market the young professional with a penchant for nostalgia, often looking for something pretty for a shelf in the nursery, although the sisters are keen to point out their wares are 'decorative items' rather than toys, albeit decorative items that appeal to our nostalgia for childhood.

Characters include birds – starlings, budgerigars, crows, robins, sandpipers, pigeons and chickens – Jack Russells, Staffordshire figurine-inspired lions, greyhounds and King Charles spaniels, whales, seals, badgers, pigs, hamsters, sheep and even an anteater, the list goes on, so the sisters never get bored of making. Each character has the look and feel of a long-lost toy in mint condition, bringing back a wave of nostalgia for our early childhoods. Incredibly tactile, they are made from charity-shop, soft Witney blankets, with plush velvet backing from rescued cast-off velvet curtains, or from gifted upholstery off-cuts. Double knitting wool is used as thread, also sourced at charity shops. Recycling is a very important part of what the sisters do, says Sue.

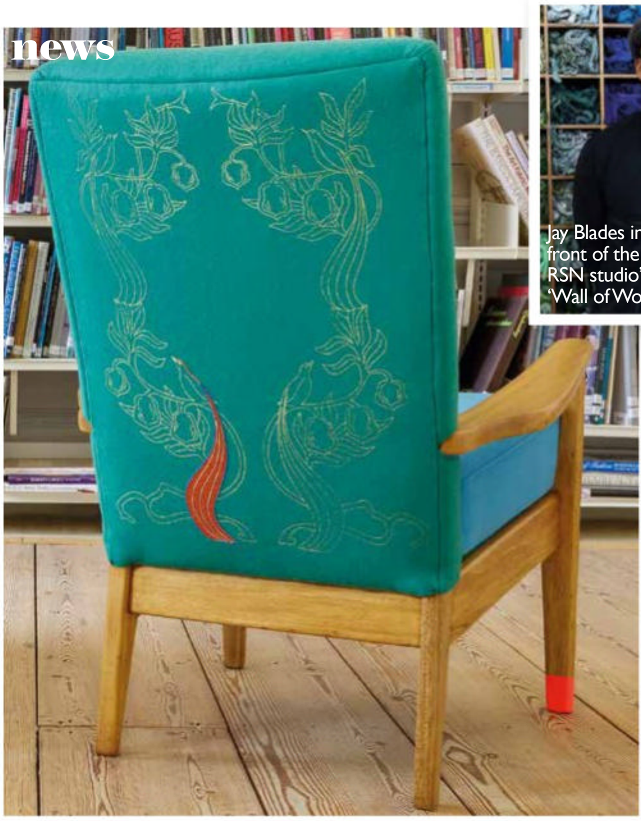
Their journey began at their children's school art club, when one of the organisers suggested an art club for adults. The name of their business arose around this time as they searched for something that referenced their seaside location in Bournemouth. When the art club petered out, Jo and Sue carried on making. They started selling at local markets first, and then the Crafty Fox markets in London, where they would take suitcases brimful of creatures and cloud-shaped cushions, and come home empty-handed. During lockdowns, Jo and Sue perfected the skill of keeping 27,000 textile-lovers entertained on their Instagram site, which links to their shopfront on Etsy. The sisters are considering a dedicated website, too. Producing art dolls, for the love of the craftsmanship and at higher prices is another consideration, such as the three-dimensional starlings Sue is creating from shrink-washed woolly jumpers, each one perched on a wooden children's building block.

The sisters feel 'overwhlemed' by the response to their work and their position is enviable, but don't underestimate the artistry or time it takes to create each creature, to give them their 'own little personality', complete with party hat, headscarf, or even fez, to spread that little bit of joy.

Claire Waring

INSTAGRAM @MADEBYSWIMMER
ETSY.COM/UK/SHOP/MADEBYSWIMMER

Above left: The woolly starling art doll that could be a new direction
Above right: The Staffordshire figurine-inspired creatures
Left: Cuddly creatures, from hamster to anteater, all made in soft, recycled Witney blankets, double knitting wool and reused velvet



Jay Blades in front of the RSN studio's 'Wall of Wool'

Jay Blades and RSN join forces

The embroidery studio at the Royal School of Needlework (RSN) has joined forces with Jay Blades, the face of *The Repair Shop* on BBC One, to breathe life into two iconic Parker Knoll chairs. Like the RSN, Parker Knoll has been established for more than 150 years. A pre-1920s Art Nouveau design from the RSN's archive was selected for the backs of the chairs, which features an exotic bird in a fruit tree. In blue, green and terracotta, with a touch of copper and gold, the design was only part-stitched to convey the effect of climate change and deterioration of the environment. On one chair, the brightly coloured tail of the bird was hand-embroidered using vibrant terracotta and couched metal threads; on the other, the quince was the focus with purl detailing. Both designs involved appliqué. Jay Blades said: 'It has been such a great experience to work with the RSN, not only do I love to collaborate, I even got to learn some embroidery.' Anne Butcher, head of the RSN embroidery studio, said: 'It has been wonderful to work with Jay and to explore ways to promote an environmental message. Everything we do is by hand... we also have the infamous 'Wall of Wool', which is home to a rainbow of threads, many of which have been donated. These threads are reused in our projects, for both conservation and restoration work, as well as new commissions.'

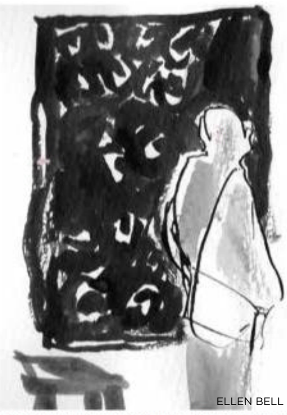
ROYAL-NEEDLEWORK.ORG.UK

INSTAGRAM @JAY_ANDCO

Drawn to Ruthin Craft Centre

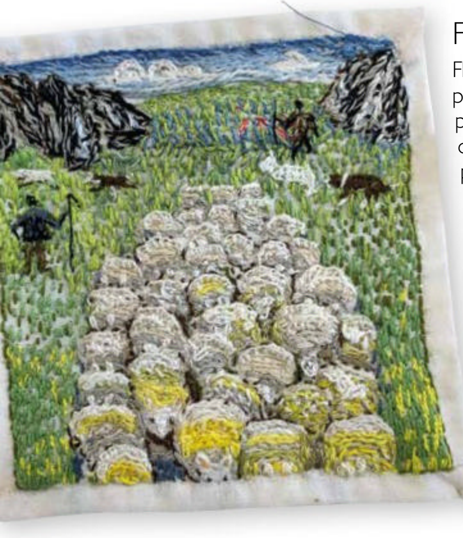
Ellen Bell, one of *Embroidery*'s freelance writers, has just embarked on a year-long Arts Council Wales-funded reportage drawing project called Gallery Watching. Hosted by Ruthin Craft Centre and Oriel Davies, Newtown, the project involves Ellen making drawings of the galleries' visitors as they engage with the art and the art spaces. Culture Colony has been commissioned to make a film of the project and there will be an exhibition of Ellen's sketchbooks.

GALLERYWATCHING.ELLENBELL.CO.UK/



Right: Drawing made in Ruthin Craft Centre during Helen Yardley's Drawing for Floors exhibition

ELLEN BELL



Flock together

Flock Together is a new embroidery project which uses stitch to unite participants in a shared language of making to create a large public participation artwork. Inspired by *The Red Dress,* showing at ACEarts in Somerton, Somerset, in January, and their 'no borders, no boundaries' ethos, ACE has devised this outreach programme for the local and wider community to get involved and become part of a collective flock. Each piece will be mounted on to large fabric panels for an exhibition starting on 14 January.

ACEARTS.CO.UK/FLOCK-TOGETHER

The Fashion Museum was housed in the Assembly Rooms but has now closed ahead of its change of venue

Fashionable down to the letter

The internationally important Fashion Museum Bath will be moving to a new location at the Old Post Office in the centre of Bath. It will also create a fashion collection archive in Locksbrook, to the west of the city centre, on Bath Spa University's campus. The wider collection will be housed here, providing space for specialist care and study opportunities for students. The aim is for the museum and archive to open in three to eight years, which will depend on fundraising. Bath and North East Somerset Council has submitted a £20 million bid to the government's Levelling Up Fund, to help complete the £37 million project. The move will boost the visitor economy of the region and create jobs and opportunities. The council has also received a £2.4 million grant from the West of England Combined Authority, which will contribute towards the regeneration of the Milsom Quarter, including the opening of the new fashion museum. Councillor Kevin Guy, leader of Bath and North East Somerset Council, said: 'Located in the heart of Bath, the Old Post Office presents us with a unique opportunity to create one of the world's great museums of fashion. It will be more accessible, engage with a wider range of people, tell a greater range of stories than we've ever been able to do before and will help to boost surrounding businesses.'

FASHIONMUSEUM.CO.UK

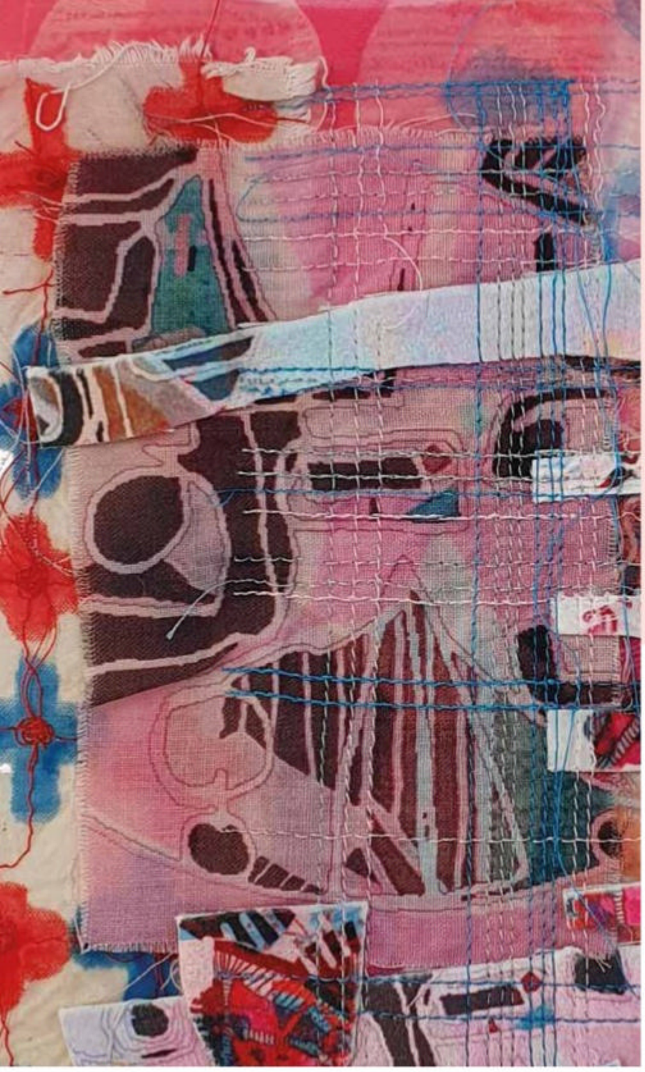
Prize announcements postponed

The 2022 Hand & Lock Prize for Embroidery winners announcements have been postponed until early 2023. Please visit the Prize for Embroidery website and social media to see this year's prize finalists and their incredible creations. The official winners announcements will now take place in January 2023.

HANDEMBROIDERY.COM/THE-PRIZE

making the grade

Meet two of the eight graduates selected by the Embroiderers' Guild in the summer of 2022 as 'ones to watch.' The graduates received a grant and free exhibition space at the Knitting and Stitching Shows



✪ DAMASQUE WELLS

As a child and teenager Damasque Wells' mother always encouraged her to pursue her creativity, but it wasn't until her mother's death in 2014 that Wells built up enough courage to leave her old life behind. Having visited Wales as a tourist on several occasions, Wells felt a connection to the land which evoked memories of growing up on a magical farm in Adelaide. Although Adelaide was a vastly different landscape, she says Wales made her feel a certain 'sentimentality' and nostalgia for her childhood.

She settled in Swansea – this 'ugly lovely town… crawling, sprawling… by the side of a long and splendid curving shore', as Dylan Thomas put it. Although quite a drastic move, it enabled Wells to create a huge shift in her creative endeavours. Choosing to study at University of Wales Trinity St David was not a hard decision as she was immediately drawn to their surface pattern design degree.

It wasn't until she started placing her patterns and designs on clothing, accessories and interior objects and spaces that she could see a starting point for her designs. Wells produces flamboyant and striking creations and aims to produce collections and products that are bespoke and tailored to the specifications of her clientele.

Wells feels the need for an eclectic mix of cultural clashes, intertwining textured fabrics and layers to produce beautiful handmade pieces that are influenced by cultures from around the world. The influences on her brand include a mix of 'urban Alice in Wonderland', 'cyberpunk-meets-shabby-chic-Gaudiesque' and a 'metropolitan hippy extravaganza'.

DAMASQUEWELLS.COM

FACEBOOK DAMASQUEWELLSARTISTDESIGNERMAKER

✪ SUZY AGER

Embracing the opportunity to embark on a career change, Suzy Ager studied a BA in textile design at Nottingham Trent University, where she graduated in 2021 with first-class honours. This was followed by a master's in textile design innovation, also at Nottingham Trent University, where she was able to explore further her interest in stitched and printed textiles.

Ager's practice uses embroidery and print, marrying painterly expressive marks with intricate details to express stories relating to the natural world. Her master's project centred around birds of prey, aiming to capture both their character and movement while drawing attention to the plights they face.

The foundations of her work are based on hand-drawn imagery which she translates into textiles, while engaging with the 'slow textiles' hand-crafted ethos and passion for materials. Ager's works combine hand-guided machine stitch, hand-embroidery and natural dye practices, primarily using natural materials.

She is interested in creating pieces as artworks, in three dimensions, but would also like to explore a more commercial side, suitable for interior or fashion products as she seeks to establish herself as an independent designer-maker.

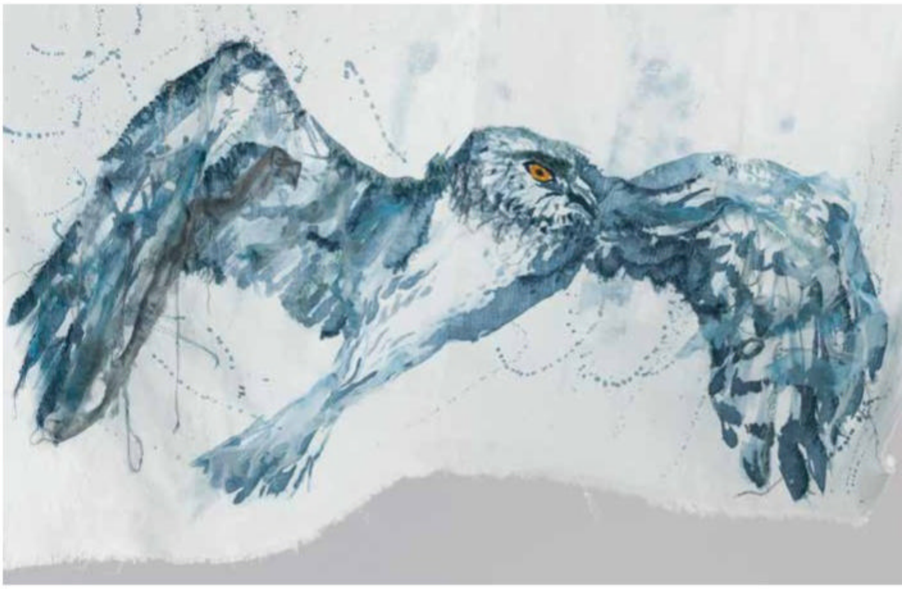
Inspired by local conservation concerns, Ager strives to create work with a meaning which will engage the viewer, and continually seeks ways to enhance the sustainability of her practice.

As well as being selected for the Embroiderers' Guild Graduate Showcase at the Knitting and Stitching Shows 2022, during 2021 Ager exhibited at the Hand & Lock Prize for Embroidery as a finalist in the student art category.

Her work was selected for The Broderers' Art of Embroidery exhibition in February 2022 at Bankside Gallery, London. One of Ager's embroidery artworks is also now part of the Diana Springall collection.

SUZYAGER.WIXSITE.COM

INSTAGRAM @AGER.SUZANNE



animal magic

Ella Kearvell graduated in June 2022 but already she is embarking on a career making art dolls, and is grappling with all that is involved in being an artist-maker with a small business

■ It was the giraffe that first caught my attention. Tiny scraps of cloth patchworked along his neck to create the caramel and buttercream-coloured camouflage of picture books. A flower garland around his neck and an African print open neck shirt. Two stubby horns made from cord frayed at the ends. He looks like he's nonchalantly enjoying a day around the pool. Then were the two little goats: sisters, with jaunty ears, their heads wreathed in summer flowers, wearing exquisite clothing with their faces patchworked too. You want to reach out and take Ella Kearvell's creations with you, to give them a home. There is something about their patchworked faces that makes you want to care for these creatures, or 'fabric souls' as their creator lovingly refers to them.

Art dolls are on the rise. Ella studied Mister Finch at school, purveyor of exquisite characters from a fairytale world. We showcased the art dolls of Johanna Flanaghan of The Pale Rook in our September/October issue, along with the fun and colourful anthropomorphic animal creations of Bryony Rose Jennings on the cover. But why do we love art dolls so much? Ella has a theory: 'I think people are looking for more unique things to buy and display in their homes. Of course there are paintings and other art pieces, but owning little dolls is a way of expressing a nostalgia for their childhood.'

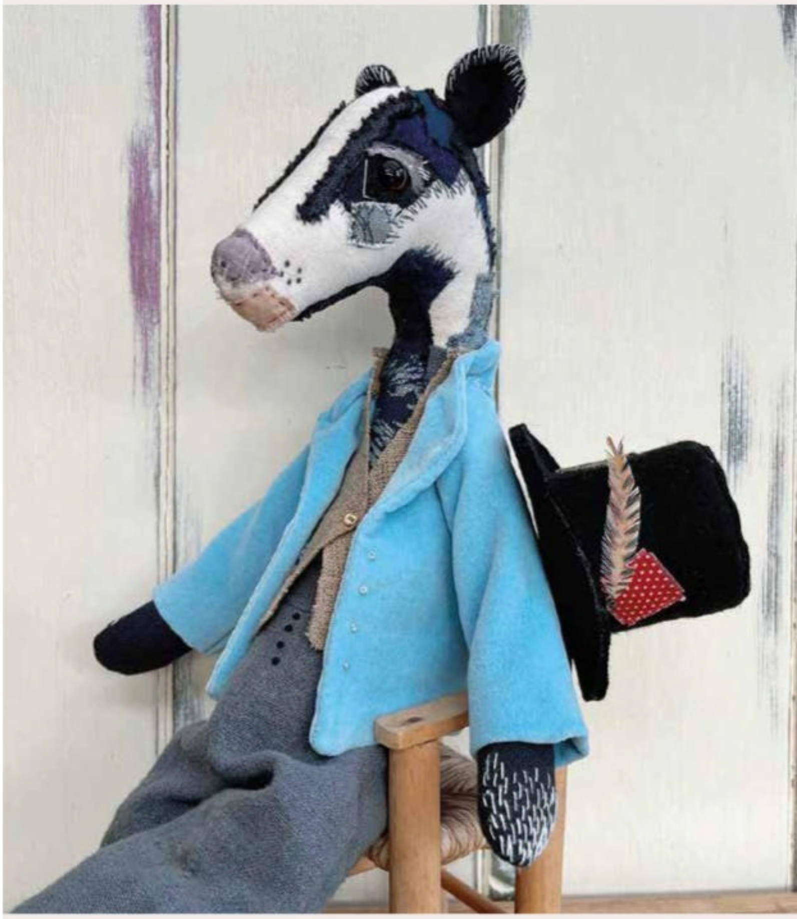
Ella's dolls are created with a lot of hard work and artistry to get the right look. It takes two to three weeks to make one doll. She starts with the plain linen body and the face, with carefully placed stitches used to pull in the features and give each doll character. Once the face and head are finished and she knows what character the doll has, it's on to the clothing, using recycled scraps discovered at charity shops and on the Etsy website. The Midsummer Goats' skirts are made from a linen napkin from a charity shop; the Giraffe in Hawaii's shirt is made out of a scrap of African fabric sourced on Etsy.

The attention to detail that Ella puts into these dolls' clothes is partly to do with her background. She studied costume and performance design at Arts University Bournemouth, designing wardrobes for both university and hypothetical productions. One of the most unusual was a university remake of *The Little Mermaid*. 'Kate' and 'William' were roped in as prince and princess, while Ella was called on to perform plastic surgery on the costume of a modern day sea witch, the villainous Ursula.

'The director wanted the sea witch to have these huge fishnet-stockinged tentacles coming out of the costume. She had a big corset which had fleshy tones stitched on to it to suggest she had been pulled apart.'

Ella only graduated in June 2022 but immediately set about making her characters in a small downstairs workroom. Her first doll was a bohemian hare, who wears a silk cravat, waistcoat and breeches. He remains her favourite 'fabric soul'.

Making goes back a long way in Ella's life. 'My first memory of making is at my auntie's house with a 'build your own fairy' kit. I also made things from patterns, like mohair bears, and enjoyed needle felting with my mum. It is really nice to work with felt and blanket stitching looks good with it.'



She was keen on art at school – 'I loved to draw and would spend all my spare time with a pencil or paintbrush in my hand' – and then went to art college in Strode, near Glastonbury, for two years, before university in Bournemouth.

Her mum, who makes kanthas, still influences Ella as she is free to use her mum's hand-dyed kantha cotton for stitching the fur or hair of her characters. She uses 'quite rough' stitches and says it's 'almost like sketching', gathering the stitches in to give the look of fur. She then uses a thinner cotton for sewing on her trademark patches.

Ella blocks out her mornings for making but in the afternoons she works in the local primary school. 'I'd like to be crafting full-time,' she says. To meet this goal, she is reaching out to local shops, having just completed a badger commission for Dawe's Twineworks in West Coker, Britain's only surviving Victorian twineworks. The badger has a top hat complete with a feather and has some lovely detailing. Based in rural Somerset, Ella would now like to create a doll inspired by Somerset and the cider industry.

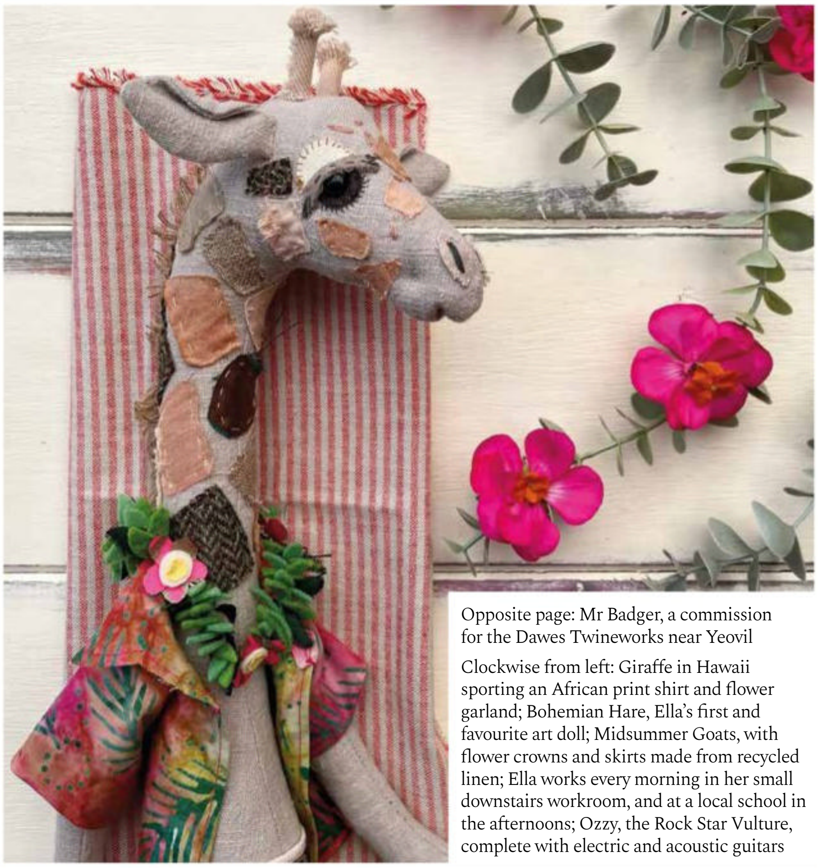
She promotes her 'fabric souls' on Instagram, ideally suited to showing off art to advantage but not without its problems. 'I think Instagram has had a lot of trouble in the past couple of months because it's not reaching out to as many people as we'd like, but it's great for its visual experience and getting photos out there quickly.'

Ella is also considering making a second range of dolls with less complicated outfits that she can produce more quickly and sell in a lower price band.

For this enterprising graduate, who loved the fashions of Alexander McQueen for their use of animal and insect patterns, time does not stand still, partly because she is burgeoning with ideas. 'I like insects and moths as well,' she says, so perhaps we can expect a characterful parade of insect dolls… Who knows what enchantment lies ahead?

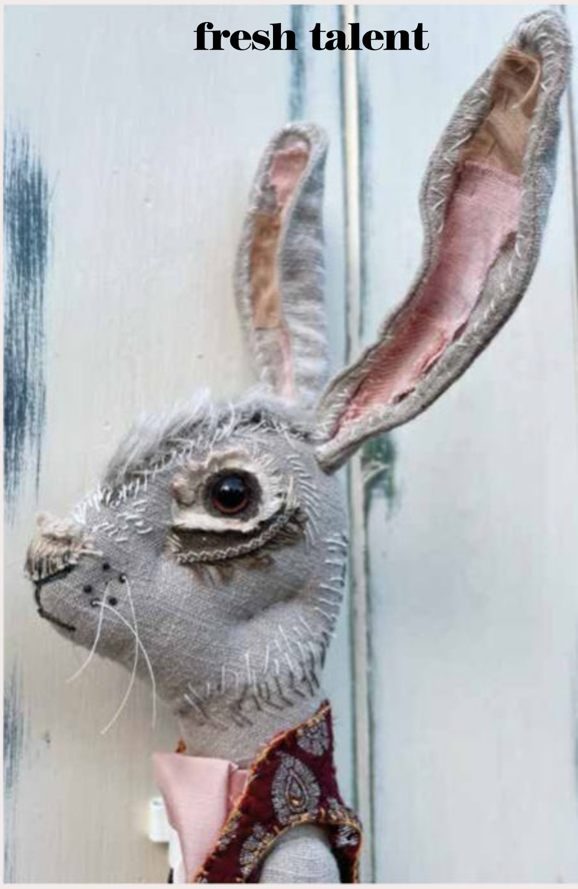
Claire Waring

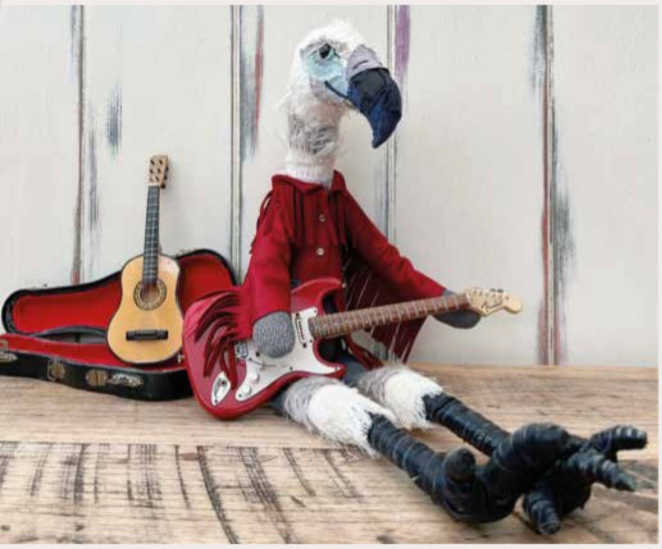
WWW.ELLASHANDMADECREATIONS.COM
INSTAGRAM @ELLAKEARVELL

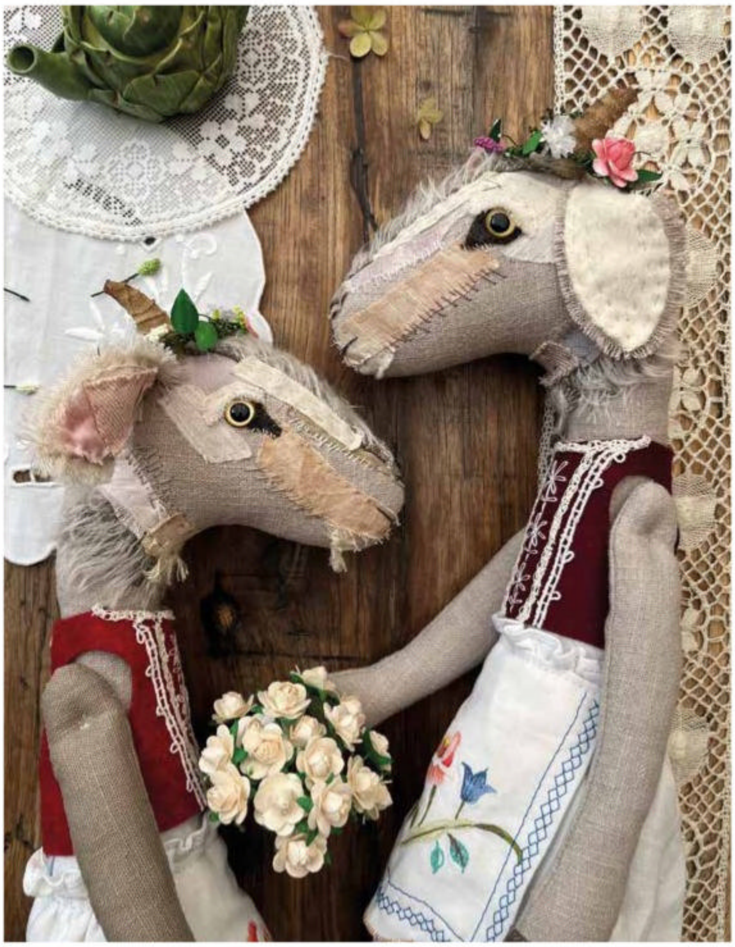


Opposite page: Mr Badger, a commission for the Dawes Twineworks near Yeovil

Clockwise from left: Giraffe in Hawaii sporting an African print shirt and flower garland; Bohemian Hare, Ella's first and favourite art doll; Midsummer Goats, with flower crowns and skirts made from recycled linen; Ella works every morning in her small downstairs workroom, and at a local school in the afternoons; Ozzy, the Rock Star Vulture, complete with electric and acoustic guitars







the weird the wonderful & the well-heeled

A WHISTLESTOP TOUR OF GALLERY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2023

Grayson's Art Club: The Exhibition III

PHOTO BY RICHARD ANSETT

■ THE YEAR AHEAD is packed with exciting exhibitions, so grab a cuppa and we'll conduct a flying tour of some of the highlights. Expect visual puns and bawdy humour as Tate Britain presents the work of **Sarah Lucas** (26 Sep-14 Jan), one of the Young British Artists of the 1990s. Using ordinary objects in unexpected ways, she challenges our understanding of sex, class and gender. *Pauline Bunny,* 1997, saw Lucas stuff variously coloured pairs of tights with cotton wadding to make 'bunny girl' forms. The female forms were originally arranged around a snooker table, their passively lolling legs representing femininity, in thrall to the male arena.

Also at Tate Britain, **Women in Revolt! Art, Activism and the Women's Movement in the UK 1970-1990** will showcase art by 100 women who helped change the face of British culture, including the humorous and subversive crochet sculpture of feminist artist Su Richardson (8 Nov-7 Apr) .

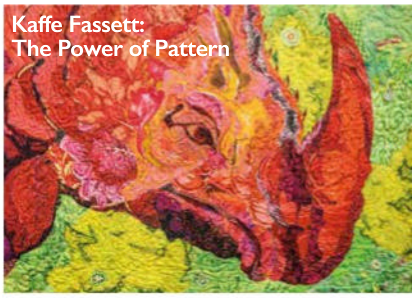
Tate Modern's monumental sculptures by Chilean **Cecilia Vicuña** are on site until 16 April, while Inherited Threads features Gee's Bend quilt-maker Aolar Mosely, and contemporary artists Zohra Opoku and Antonio Pichillá Quiacaín, who explore the cultural significance of textiles in relation to their own heritage (until June).

Outside the capital, Tate Liverpool welcomes the **12th Liverpool Biennial** (10 Jun-17 Sep), marking the 25th anniversary of the UK's largest contemporary visual arts festival. And, there's a second chance to see **Hew Locke's The Procession** as it moves from the Tate to BALTIC Gateshead (18 Feb-11 Jun).

Back in London, at the Fashion and Textile Museum, discover the unknown and virtually unrecorded world of textile designs by the influential pop artist and icon **Andy Warhol** (31 Mar-10 Sep). Dating from his early career as a designer and illustrator in the 1950s and early 1960s, Warhol's textiles are now considered an important part of his work. The exhibition includes over 45 textile patterns, depicting everything from ice cream sundaes, toffee apples and colourful buttons to cut lemons and jumping clowns.

Hew Locke's The Procession

PHOTO BY JOE HUMPHRYS



Kaffe Fassett: The Power of Pattern

Ai Weiwei, known for his powerful art and activism, has collaborated with the Design Museum for a major exhibition that will be the first to present his work as a commentary on design (7 Apr-30 Jul). The exhibition draws on Ai's fascination with historical Chinese artefacts, placing their traditional craftsmanship in dialogue with the more recent history of demolition and urban development in China.

The museum also hosts a major exhibition celebrating **The Offbeat Sari** (19 May-17 Sep), while **Weird Sensation: Feels Good** continues until 10 April, focusing on ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response): a physical sensation of euphoria or deep calm, sometimes a tingling in the body, triggered through sound, touch and movement. Current exhibitions include **Sneakers Unboxed** (until 9 Apr) and **Yinka Ilori: Parables for Happiness** (until 25 Jun), celebrating Illori's cultural influences, especially Nigerian textiles.

At the V&A South Kensington, **Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto** (16 Sep-25 Feb) will be the first UK exhibition dedicated to Chanel's work, from the opening of her first millinery boutique in Paris in 1910 to showing her final collection in 1971. Continuing at V&A South Kensington are **Africa Fashion** until 16 April; **Hallyu! The Korean Wave** until June; and **Beguiling Beni** until 31 March. The Japanese dye 'beni', made from safflower petals, produces red hues and an iridescent green. This display reveals its many uses in fashion, from heel-less shoes by Noritaka Tatehana to textiles.

Outside of London, V&A Dundee is to observe its fifth birthday with **Tartan** (1 Apr-14 Jan), a celebration of the global story of a unique pattern which expresses tradition, revolt and diversity.

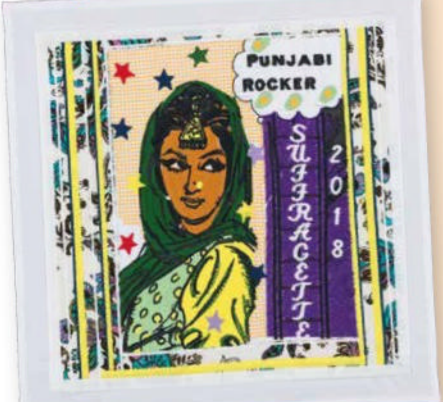
Back in the capital, the RA's **Souls Grown Deep Like the Rivers** (17 Mar-18 Jun) will include work by Gee's Bend quilters, and who can guess at the textile art in the **Summer Exhibition** (12 Jun-20 Aug)?

Whitechapel Gallery's **Xadie Xa: House Gods, Animal Guides and Five Ways 2 Forgiveness** continues until 30 April with an ambitious installation where sculptures, textiles and paintings act as 'tricksters' and 'shapeshifters' among a large-scale fabric structure inspired by a traditional Korean home, known as a hanok.

One of the largest exhibitions ever staged at Kensington Palace, with over 200 stunning items, **Crown to Couture** (5 Apr-29 Oct) tells the story of how the rules and politics of dress at court have influenced modern-day couture fashion, and includes red carpet looks worn by musicians Lizzo and Lady Gaga.

In the North, a must-see is Manchester Art Gallery's **Dandy Style** (until 1 May) focusing on men's fashion from the 18th century to the present day. Meanwhile, the industrial revolution that transformed Lancashire into an engine of fast fashion, proving unsustainable, is the

Ruthin Craft Centre in Wales is a must-visit with a great line-up for 2023, starting with a chance to see **Motive/Motif: Artists Commemorate the Suffragettes**, in collaboration with Charlotte Hodes (14 Jan-16 Apr). Twenty renowned and emerging artists have been commissioned to create an image embroidered on a handkerchief to mark women's suffrage and the passing of the 1918 Representation of the People Act. Also on show will be three banners created in Wales. Jeanette Orrell's **An Indigo Summer** (22 Apr-2 Jul) is an evocatively named exhibition which explores how Japanese indigo dyeing helped the artist cope with loss. Jeanette's daughter, Ellie Evelyn Orrell, has written a lyrical book of the same title detailing the story behind the work, recently published by University of Wales Press. **Matthew Harris** shows textiles which oscillate with colour, texture and rhythm (8 Jul-late Sep), while the delayed but much-anticipated **Laura Thomas: Weave** will explore unconventional textiles for contemporary spaces (Oct 23-Jan 24).



ARTWORK BY CHILA BURMAN

focus of **British Textile Biennial 2023**: can making textiles be regenerative (29 Sep-29 Oct)?

In Cumbria at Farfield Mill, the line-up is packed. **Once upon a Thread: International Textiles Exhibition** (11 Jan-19 Mar) returns with the winning quilts on the theme of stories from childhood, whether world-famous books, family legends, dreams or imagination. **Exspiravit** (11 Jan-2 Apr) features textile works by five women artists who studied at Manchester School of Art. **Congruence** (29 Mar-2 Jul) spotlights florist and hand-weaver Isobelle Stothert, while **The Natural World: Tapestry Touring International** (12 Jul-24 Sep) includes hand-woven tapestries by 33 artists. Another for the diary is **Textilia3** (4 Oct-23 Dec), a well-established group of 14 textile artists, while **Momentum... Memories, Journeys and Times** (11 Oct-23 Dec) allows Sandra Meech and Elizabeth Brimelow, two landscape artists working in collage and stitch, to shine.

At Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh **Knitwear: Chanel to Westwood** (until 11 Mar) displays over 150 striking knitwear pieces, while joyful **Kaffe Fassett: The Power of Pattern** (31 Mar-8 Jul) transfers here from London.

The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art's **New Arrivals** (until 12 Feb) presents two soft sculptures: Dorothea Tanning's *Primitive Seating* and Jann Haworth's *Old Lady II,* based on a photo of her great-grandmother, combining a reclaimed Victorian christening gown with hand-stitch.

Elsewhere, at the Crafts Study Centre, Farnham, **Dancing in the Womb** (10 Jan-13 May) from Rezia Wahid presents a collection of six woven lengths inspired by pregnancy and motherhood, while at the MAC, Birmingham, **Grayson's Art Club: The Exhibition III** (until 16 Apr) will showcase art submitted by the public alongside new works by Grayson and Phillipa Perry and celebrities, including Bill Bailey and Dame Prue Leith.

Finally, have you visited the UK's only museum dedicated to celebrating the heritage, art and industry of carpet-making? **The Museum of Carpet** in Kidderminster needs to raise £20,000 in the next six months to remain viable. Their Crowdfunder can be found via museumofcarpet.org

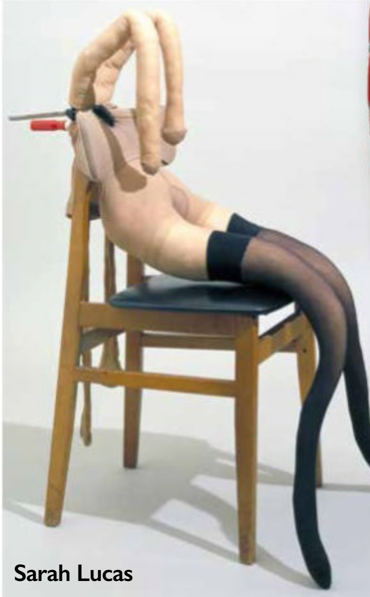
Dates are subject to change, so please check ahead of your visit.

Weird Sensation: Feels Good

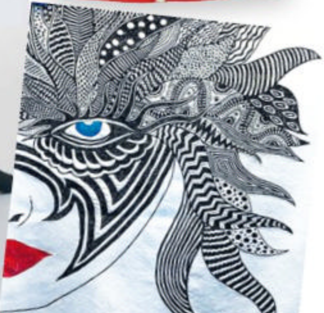
PHOTO BY SONIA SIEFF

Knitwear: Chanel to Westwood

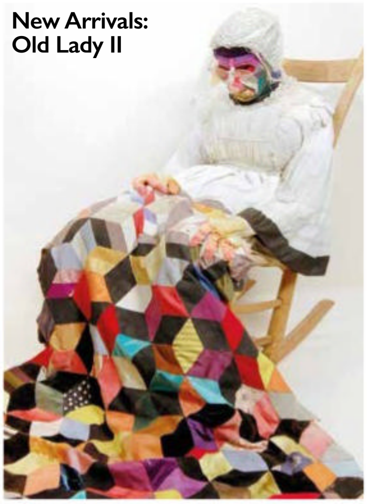
Dandy Style



Sarah Lucas



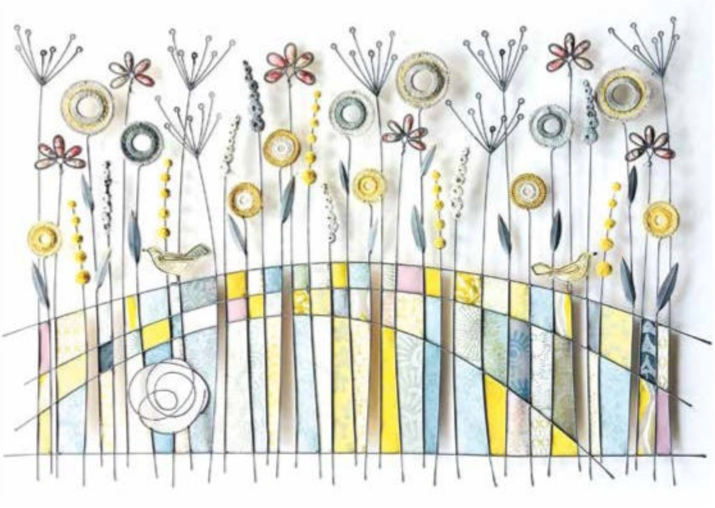
Once upon a Thread: International Textiles Exhibition

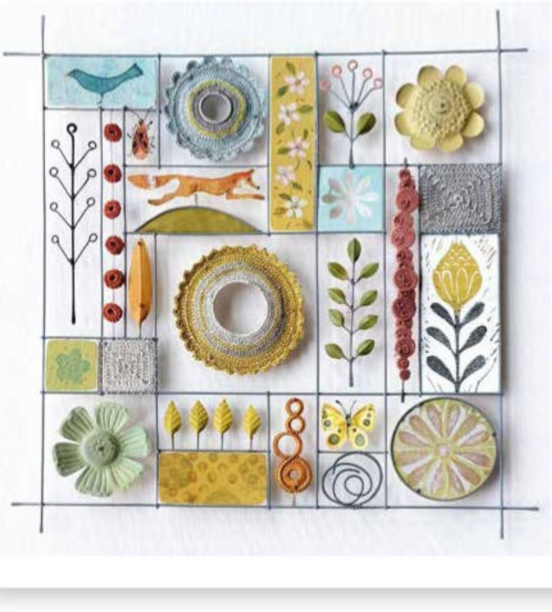


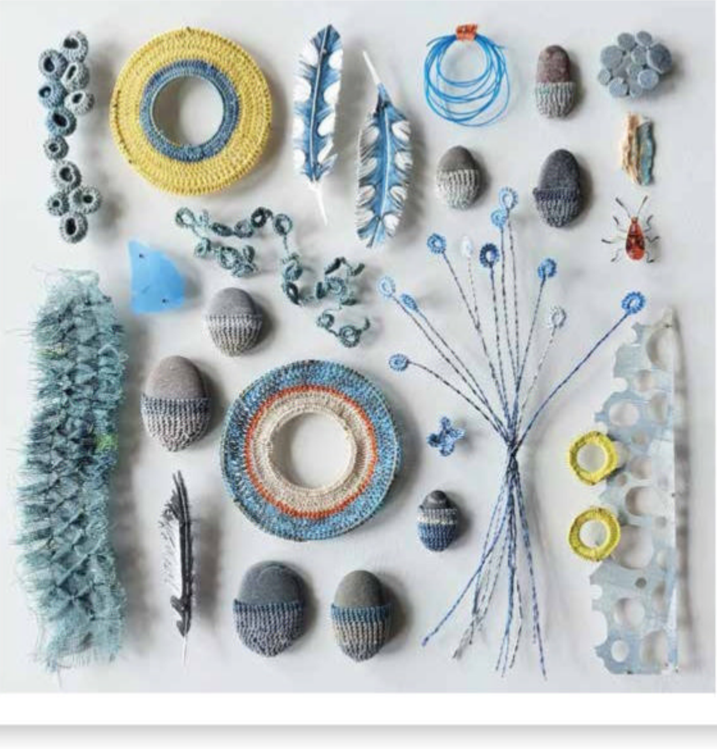
New Arrivals: Old Lady II

Tartan

ONCE UPON A THREAD, ISABEL MUNOZ: BRUJA PIRUJA; TARTAN, CHEDDAR GORGEOUS IN SUIT DESIGNED BY LIQUORICE BLACK; WERID SENSATION: FEELS GOOD PHOTO BY ED REEVE; COPYRIGHT JANN HAWORTH. COLLECTION: NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND. PURCHASED WITH HELP FROM THE HENRY AND SULAH WALTON FUND, 2021







A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

After years of making on the kitchen table – not good with three hungry boys to feed – Liz Cooksey has finally found her own space, and she doesn't have to share it with anybody

Textile artist Liz Cooksey is a perfect embodiment of the benefits of Virginia Woolf's now famous maxim of having 'a room of one's own' in which to work, think and create.

For Cooksey her studio, or 'my room' as she calls it, is a haven of calm, light and, crucially, a space in which to contain, display and lay out her work. 'When the boys were younger I used to have to work on the kitchen table,' she says, 'and then tea time would come along and everything had to be pushed to one side.'

After two of her three boys left home, leaving one of the front bedrooms in their semi-detached house in South Manchester vacant, Cooksey claimed it. A south-facing, first-floor room, it's warmed and lit by the sun the whole day. 'It's just like heaven and I don't have to share it with anybody and when I leave it everything will be just as I've left it.'

With its hotchpotch of utilitarian, borrowed, rehashed and reclaimed furniture (Cooksey's favoured working chair, a wicker tub, was one put out on the street by a neighbour as rubbish), and a glorious, mostly wall-hung display of art, found objects and organic matter, the studio's aesthetic is an eclectic one. Yet surprisingly, it's very ordered. 'If I've had a bit of a making splurge, like with these pieces I'm working on at the moment, the room will get a little bit chaotic.' Content to shut the door on any such disorder at the end of her working day, Cooksey prefers to 'start a bit ordered in the morning', admitting: 'I love hoovering the floor.'

A maker of wire and crocheted sculptures that evoke the gatherings of hedgerow flowers and grasses she encounters during her walks beside the River Mersey, Cooksey relishes the space to 'move things around' that her studio gives her. Engaging in a perpetual curation of work-in-progress (and the collections of organic matter and past work that she uses as reference and inspiration), Cooksey will often return to the studio just before bed (even when she's in the middle of cleaning her teeth) 'to see it fresh.'

And yet for all her pride in her ownership of the studio, Cooksey keeps the door open. 'I used to teach and now I work alone so I like hearing what's happening and knowing that I'm accessible.' Evidently not precious about her studio space or studio time, Cooksey is happy to allow in the distractions of family life. 'I quite like it that now my sons are older they'll come and sit with me and chat about their day.' Confessing to 'not being someone who likes to be on her own an awful lot', Cooksey will also seek company outside the home. 'If I do feel too isolated I know I can pop over the road and have a coffee with a friend or go for a dog walk.' That same fluidity of boundaries between work and leisure and her studio and domestic space is evident in Cooksey's admission to not just working all the time, but indeed, anywhere. 'When I'm watching television I'll always be making something at the same time. Or when I'm on a long journey; I love a long journey because it means I can make one thing and lots of it.'

Often starting her day wild swimming with a group of friends ('it's not very glamorous, just by the M60'), Cooksey always aims to be in her studio working by 9am. 'But I can be flexible, because if someone says after the swim shall we go for a coffee and croissant, I'd probably say yes,' Cooksey laughs, 'because I don't think I'd deny myself that.'

Ellen Bell

LIZCOOKSEY.COM

sculptures in thread

PIPPA HAYNES OF LEMON PEPPER STUDIO OFFERS A STUNNING RANGE OF ARTWORKS AND KITS, TAKING INSPIRATION FROM THE NATURAL WORLD THAT IS ON HER DOORSTEP IN A RURAL VILLAGE CLOSE TO SALISBURY

One day Pippa Haynes was working on a casual basis as a florist when she had an epiphany. The flowers were so beautiful, each one its own perfect world, that she started to think how she could recreate them in three-dimensional stitch, keeping their transient beauty alive. She had seen a couple of examples on Instagram and was living in Islington, London, a borough with a thriving creative culture, when she discovered a local haberdashery shop that was a bijou gem, with all that she needed to start stitching.

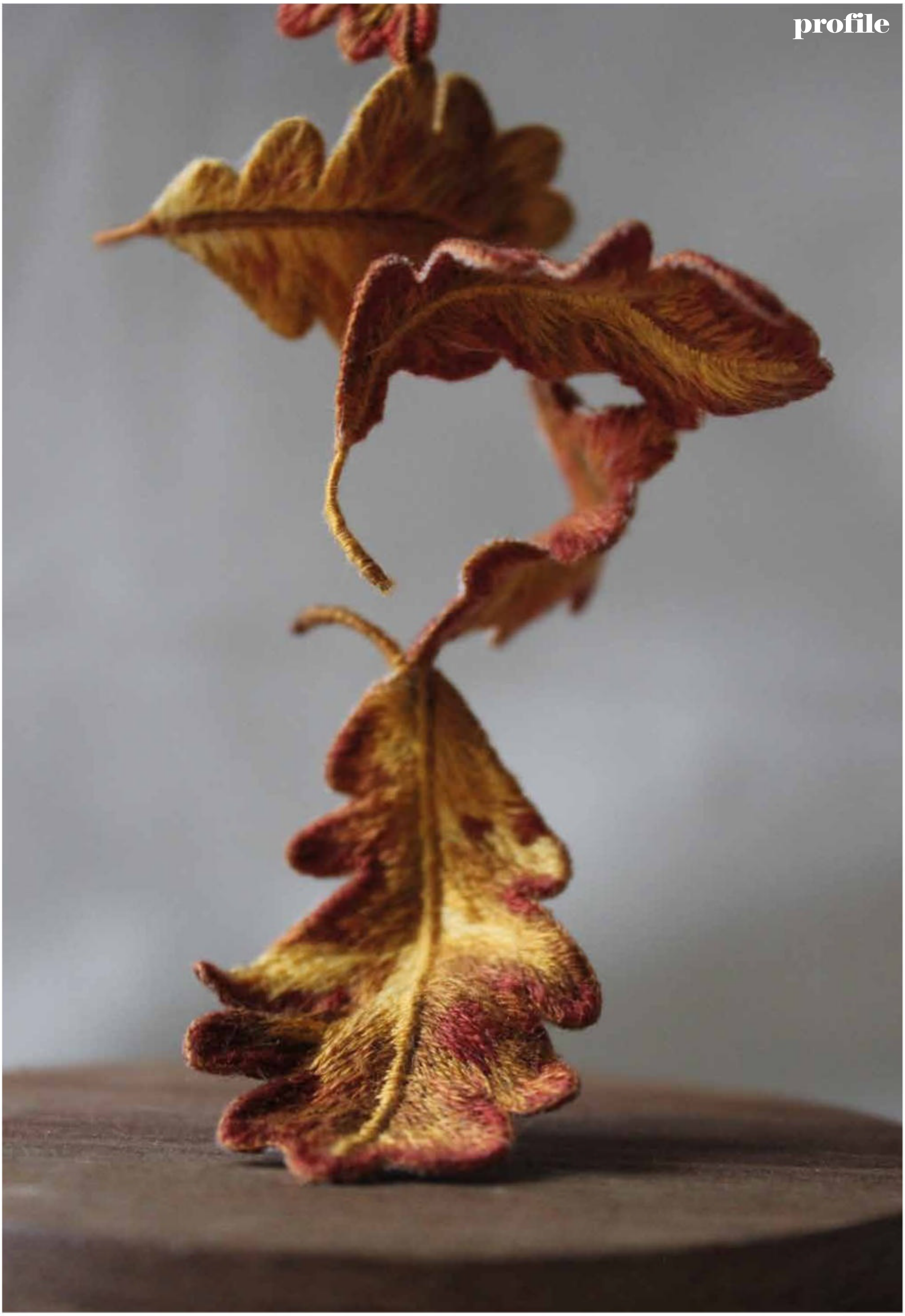
At the time, she was a jobbing window and editorial set designer, suffering from the last-minute cancellation of jobs, leaving her with little in the kitty. During moments of downtime she started to sew, teaching herself a variety of stitches and learning how they could build together to create the effects she desired. 'Then I got obsessed with it,' she admits. 'I've always been the kind of person who can't just sit and watch TV, I'm always crocheting or stitching.' Her apt Instagram tagline is: 'She sews wherever she goes.' That initial obsession served her well. In the intervening years, Pippa has become the proud proprietor of Lemon Pepper Studio, which sells exquisite stitch kits, all Pippa's original designs, and the tools and materials you might need. 'I live in the countryside now, close to Salisbury, and I'm married to a farmer. My husband's family farm is just over the hill. My life is very tied in with nature. When I'm making pieces in my studio I tend to create kits and projects to do with the time of year. I created a crocus kit that came out in the spring and a viola hairpin kit that came out in the summer. Everything is tied to the seasons. My life is literally run by the seasons now.'

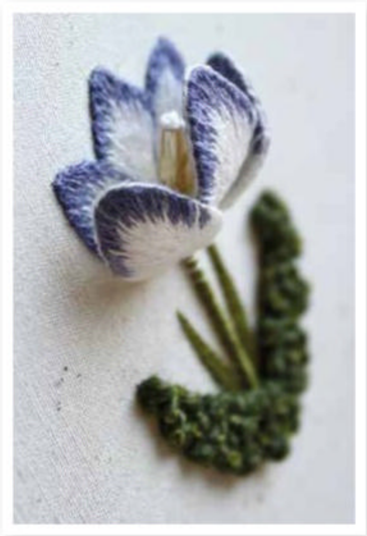
Pippa draws a wealth of inspiration from her daily walk with Olive, her miniature dachshund, along the lanes of the village and out into the countryside. She laughs that she and her husband have 'his and hers' dogs. Olive is content to sit in her basket in the small wooden studio in the garden where Pippa spends her day devising kits and working on her marketing, while her husband Barney's cocker spaniel, Evie, goes to work on the farm.

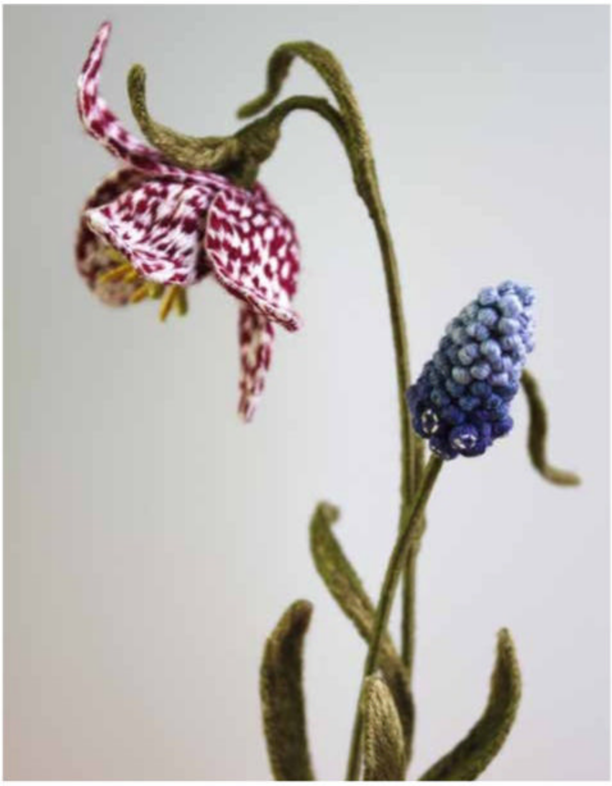
Pippa has developed a passion for gardening and her vegetable patch, which has translated into her salad bed stitch kit, exploring a range of three-dimensional stumpwork stitches, including French knots, bullion knots,

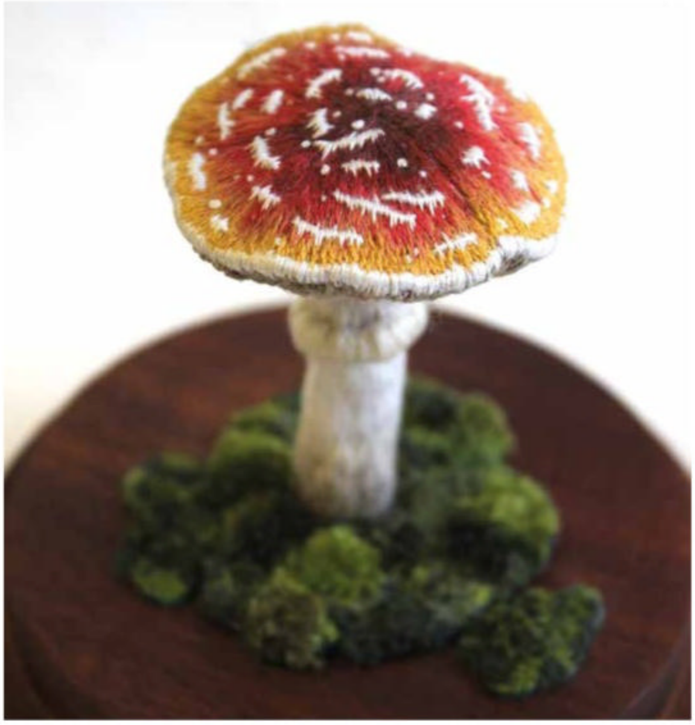
> *'Everything is tied to the seasons. My life is literally run by the seasons now'*

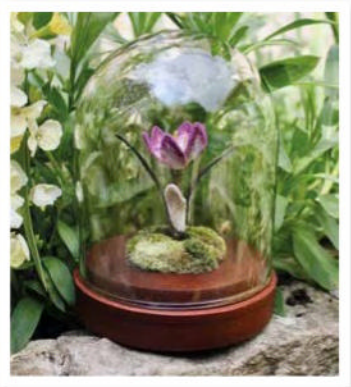
Right: Pippa ran a competition on Instagram @lemonpepperstudio to see who could provide an appropriate name for her new sculpture in thread. The winner was *Autumn's Dance* from @cabbages.and.queens The sculpture looks to be defying gravity by standing, but Pippa uses wire as a frame which is then concealed. The idea was to capture the lighter-than-air dance of the leaves as an autumnal gust caught them and whirled them around and around. Walks through the fallen leaves with dachshund Olive helped her plan the artwork











This page, clockwise from top left:
A dainty early spring crocus stitch kit;

Stunning mid-spring Snake's-head fritillary and detailed grape hyacinth;

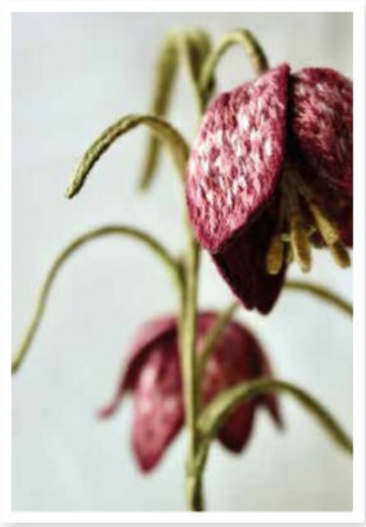
The completed crocus kit on display in a glass bell jar, with lifelike stitched and beaded mossy base;

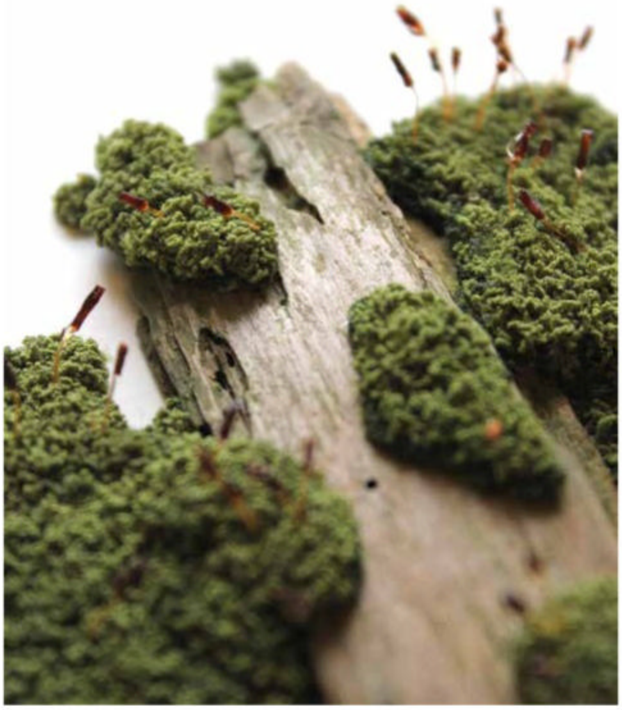
Pippa was sorry to see this moss-on-weathered-wood artwork leave the studio, on its way to a far-flung destination, but says this leaves room for pieces to spring up in its wake;

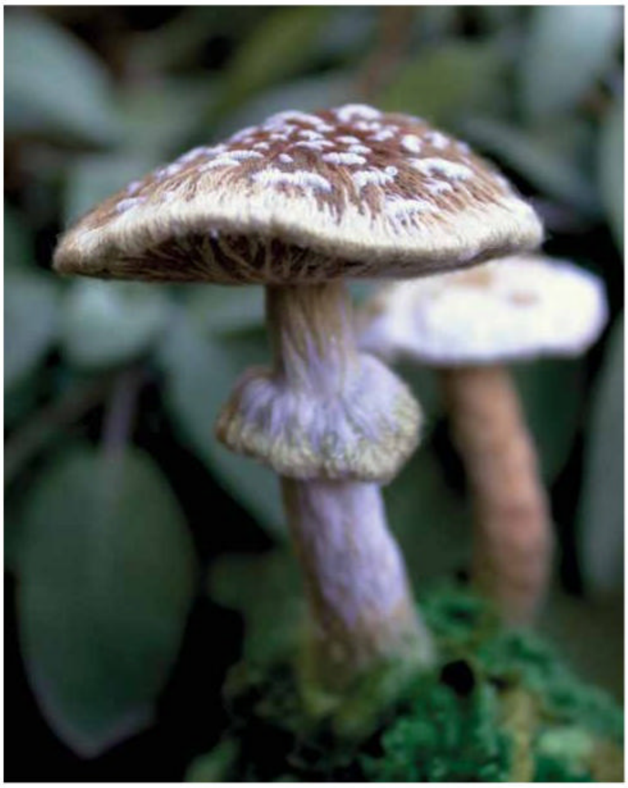
A close-up of the chequerboard effect of the snake's-head fritilary, faithfully recreated in detail;

The fly agaric fungi stitch kit, Pippa's first and favourite kit, and top, opposite page, the panthercap fungi. Pippa just loves mushrooms!

Opposite page, bottom: Pippa with another favourite piece, *Hope*, 2020, made at the start of the pandemic







Turkey work and drizzle stitch. Like many stitchers, Pippa did consider formal training before she started her business, but once she was already working in the field, adapting and translating stitch techniques, she felt her 'adaptations' would be frowned on in more formal circles. 'I've got a lot of reference books that I have collected over the years. The most used is *Mushrooms* by leading expert Roger Phillips. I also use the RSN stitch bank quite a lot, which is incredible and such a good resource, where they translate hundreds of stitches into easily accessible instructions and photos. I think it's more about learning how to do the stitches but also keeping an open mind about how you translate them into something else.'

The stitch she really loves for her fungi pieces is the bullion knot because 'it can be translated in multiple ways. With my new salad bed kits I used the cast on stitch which is quite fun. But the most used stitch is a really simple straight stitch – there is so much you can do with it. People think "Oh, it's just a flat stitch" but you can do all your colour mixing with it.'

And, if she had to pick a favourite kit? 'I think my favourite would be my fly agaric fungi because that was where I started. Mushrooms are what I love making; it's just a really nice introductory kit.'

Pippa only started making kits in 2020. She was 'always arty' and at school studied GCSE and A-level art, but was mainly using paint as a medium, with one or two forays into machine stitching into the paint. She took inspiration from the bold florals of painter Georgia O'Keefe. 'I always loved the movement in them and the colours, they were just very dramatic.'

She remembers, 'For my 15th birthday I asked to go to Tate Modern to see the Rothko exhibition. It was less about what the paintings look like and more about how they make you feel. I've always worked in three-dimensions with my embroidery and it felt like Rothko's paintings crossed over from being flat two-dimensional paintings to three-dimensions. You could go into them in a sense.'

She took a foundation art and design course in Brighton, studying everything from fashion and textiles to three-dimensional design, deciding that spatial design was her metier. At university she studied performance design which was heavily weighted towards the theatre. When she left university, her working life was split between editorial projects and window design. 'I would assist with photoshoots for magazines such as *Living Etc*, with the other half of my time spent on very practical making. I worked a lot with Rhea Thierstein and we created a Hermes window display, so I did all sorts of crazy things like make a giant dragonfly. I loved that point because I would go into work and just make.'

'I really love the bullion knot because it can be translated in multiple ways'

'Just making' is what so many of us want to do after a busy day in the office, and more so since the coronavirus lockdowns when Pippa, without an income, initially explored the idea of making kits. 'I think during that lockdown period everyone just wanted to be taken out of the mundane of going from your bedroom to your kitchen to your living room.' Luckily, embroidery is a passion people wanted to hold on to post-lockdowns.

Stitch kits are popular because, as Pippa remarks: 'You can be a really fantastic maker but not necessarily want to or have the inclination to make up your own design.'

However, she is firm in the knowledge that what she does is no different and in no way any lesser than any other fine artist. 'I think of my pieces as art because they are so sculptural. It is literally like a sculpture in thread, which is what I call them. Craft is always a bit of a demeaning word. "Oh, you're so crafty!" I'm actually an artist and it has taken me so long to say that: an embroidery artist.'

One of the things that has helped her above all else is having a supportive family. She says there were times when her parents must have thought 'Now she's a set designer, now she's a florist' but they always supported her. 'My parents always said if you want to make it happen, you can do.'

Running Lemon Pepper Studio is not without its challenges. At her rural base, Pippa often walks around the house mobile phone held aloft desperate to find a signal. She adds: 'It's so hard to plan in advance, I'm never quite on top of everything, but that's just part of running a small business.'

And what does the future hold? 'At some point I hope I will move into a bigger studio and run classes and have open workshops. That's the thing I struggle with the most, and one of the reasons I still do floristry, I'm very isolated here. Obviously, I have my dog and I have a good social life but with an open studio you'd have people coming in and asking questions and interacting with you. That's what I love when I do classes. You get that immediate feedback.'

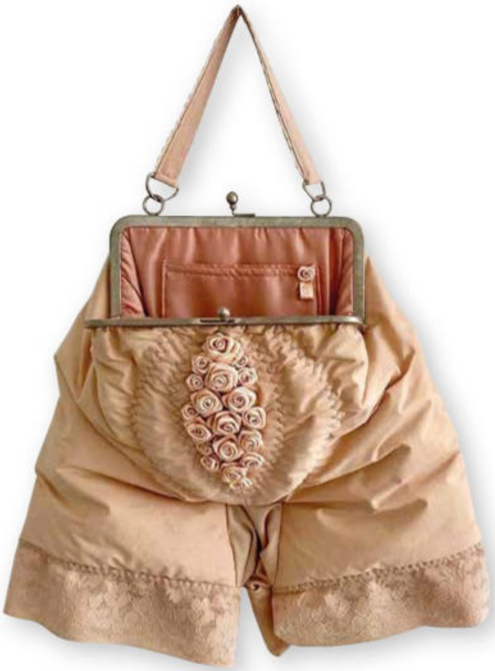
While Pippa is waiting for a bigger studio (over to husband Barney), she will be working on her salad bed designs. 'The salad bed kit is going to be the start of a series and I'm really excited about how they are all going to look together.'

Meanwhile, one of her first pieces, a wreath of mimosa in simple French knots and straight stitch, sits close to her desk as a reminder of what can be achieved with the inspiration of nature, a supportive family and a wealth of talent.

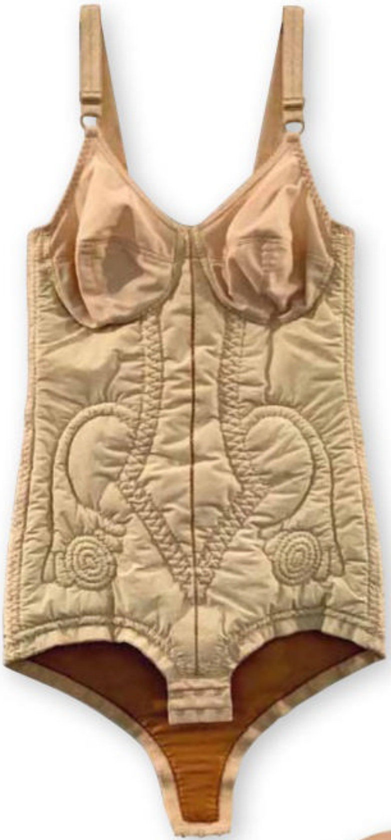
Claire Waring

LEMONPEPPERSTUDIO.COM
INSTAGRAM @LEMONPEPPERSTUDIO

It’s enough to make you blush



TEXTILE ARTIST VICTORIA MCINTOSH HAS FOUND A PURPOSE FOR BRIDGET JONES’S BIG KNICKERS, RELISHING IN THE DISCOMFORT HER FLESHY ARTWORKS MAY EVOKE. BUT SHE IS AN ARTIST WITH A CAUSE



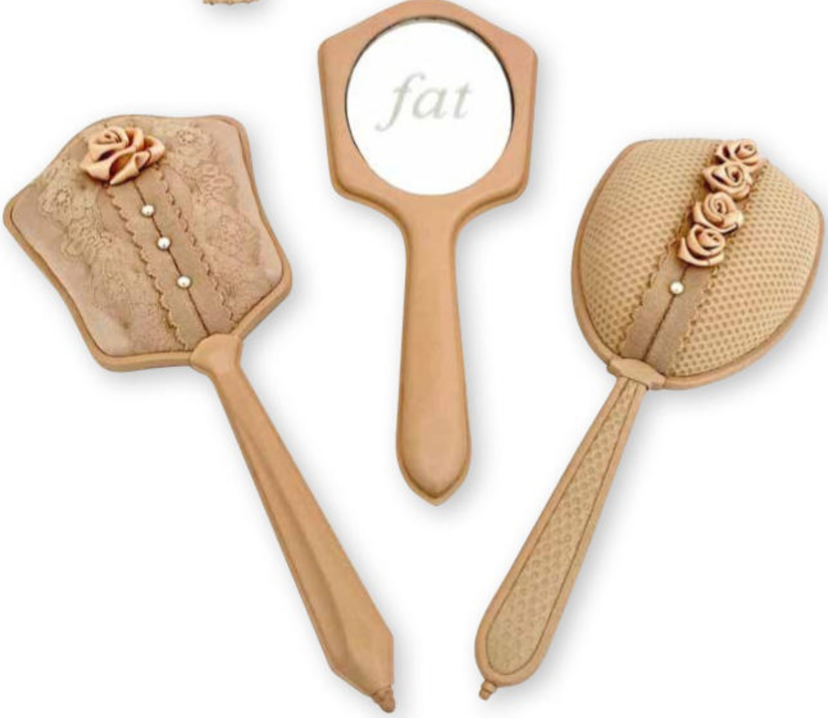
■ Aotearoa/New Zealand has a strong history of making in textiles and fashion. Internationally, its most well-known contemporary textiles event is the annual World of Wearable Art spectacular (WOW), but not every artist working with garments makes wearable pieces. Ōtepoti/Dunedin-based maker Victoria McIntosh subverts and celebrates a particular strand of secondhand apparel, transforming discarded women’s underwear into stand-alone sculptural objects with provocative messages. These pieces convey McIntosh’s love of narrative and political passion, manifestations of her strength and her wit as she explores issues of women’s health and body image.

McIntosh uses her original training as a jeweller to inform and hone her design and making skills as she intricately repurposes vintage items. Her works are often centred on the body as both site and subject, investigating women’s self-imagery and family histories. Self-described as a childhood tomboy, her work often draws on deeply personal feelings and experiences, simultaneously embracing and eschewing the feminine. McIntosh has explored the realities and fictions of adoption, and how maternity, gynaecology, weight and the ageing female body are regarded by the public and medical profession, now and in the past.

In person she is softly spoken and focused, serious about what concerns her but quick to see humour. Works are often imbued with subversive wit, especially in titles like *Assorted Baggage*, *Diseases Peculiar to Women*, *Mild Irritation* and *On the Rag*, all begging for stories to be told.

This work has a singular and, for some, a difficult aesthetic. McIntosh adapts and repurposes out-of-fashion girdles, knickers and other unloved underwear, in an array of brownish-greyish ‘blush’ tones. The colour of the underwear is important and intrinsic to how viewers may feel about her work (she says ‘disgusting’ is a good reaction). These pieces evoke real women’s issues, both pretty and unsettling, contained and messy.

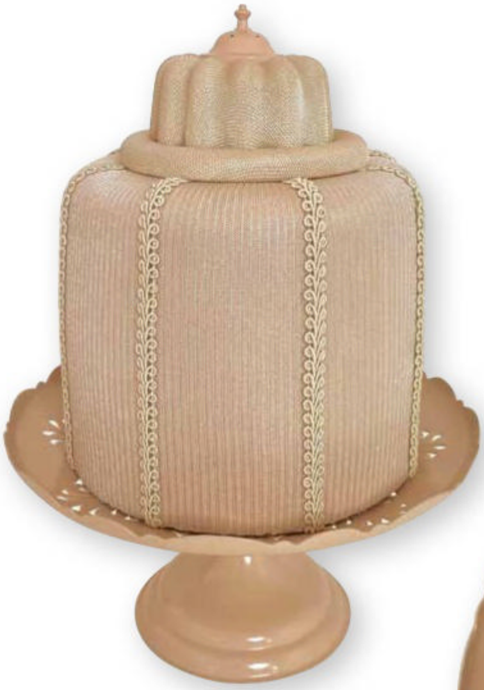
McIntosh’s extraordinary pieces also remind us of what has long been considered ‘women’s work’, at least in the western world. Garments are fused with frames from vintage handbags, opening to reveal undermining messages delicately stitched on internal pockets. Objects redolent of domestic settings hint at the places for exchanges of confidence about ‘female troubles’. Antique silver plate vessels are transformed with abundant puffs of fabric

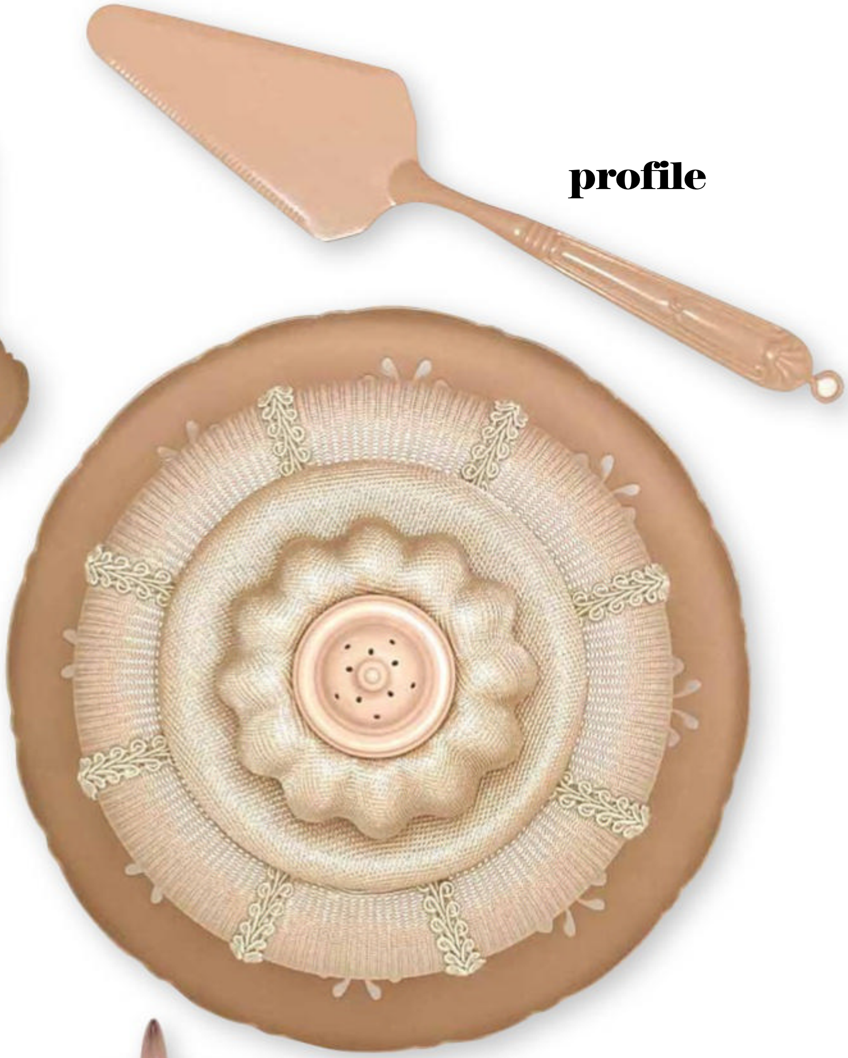


Top left: *Diseases Peculiar to Women.* Foundation garment stitched and quilted

Left: *Fat* mirrors, vintage mirrors, sandblasted with the word ‘fat’, with backs decorated with underwear fabric, ribbon elastic and pearls

Above right: *Fat Pants.* During the first lockdown McIntosh taught herself to make ribbon roses using a tutorial on YouTube. It was in Spanish, which she doesn’t speak, but she learnt from watching the tutor’s hands twist and turn the ribbon





> The colour of the underwear is important and intrinsic to how viewers may feel about her work (she says 'disgusting' is a good reaction)'

that evoke both the skirts and curves of women's bodies, and the rich patisserie and gateaux that help build those curves. Handbags morph with sugar bowls; hot water bottles carry stitched messages. Hand mirrors, small and intimate, have unsettling sandblasted messages that literally reflect back the holder's negative feelings.

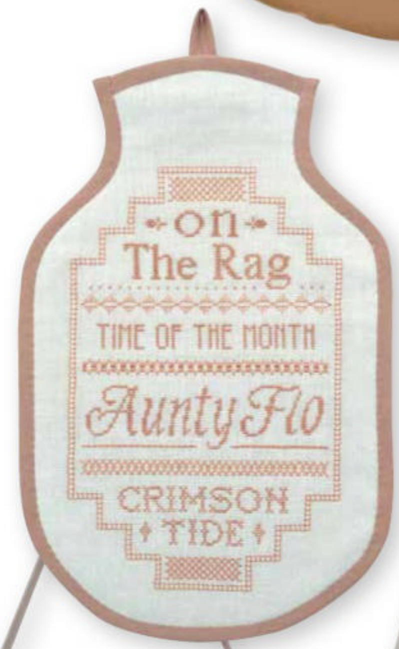
Across all of these pieces McIntosh's visual language plays out in beautiful and careful stitching, pleating, ribbon-work, beading and embroidery: historically these were essential skills for young ladies, to keep them out of trouble. However, the provocative statements made by McIntosh's work face and even invite trouble as she sets out to be difficult and to provoke discomfort.

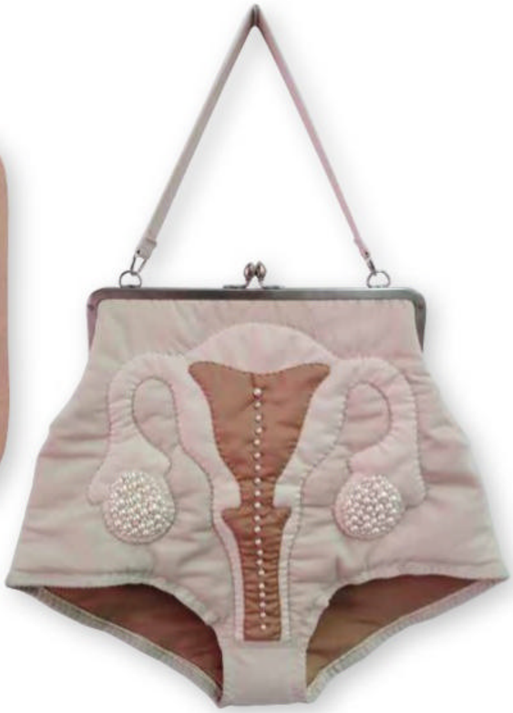
The power of her themes and craft skills combine in new visions for women and women's work: skilled, thoughtful, evocative of the past but always contemporary, inviting difficult dialogues, yet infused with humour. ⓔ

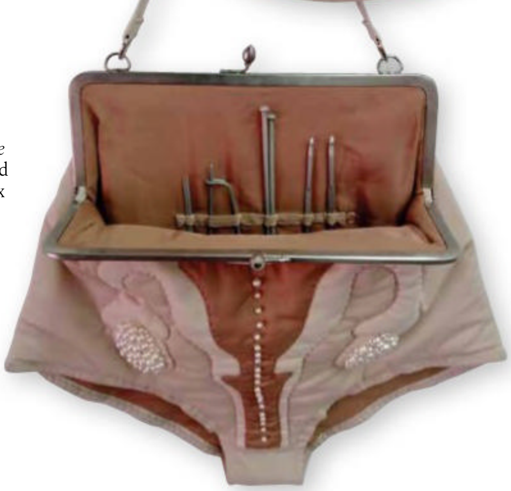
Liz Cooper

VICTORIAMCINTOSH.CO.NZ

FACEBOOK VICTORIAMCINTOSH.ARTIST



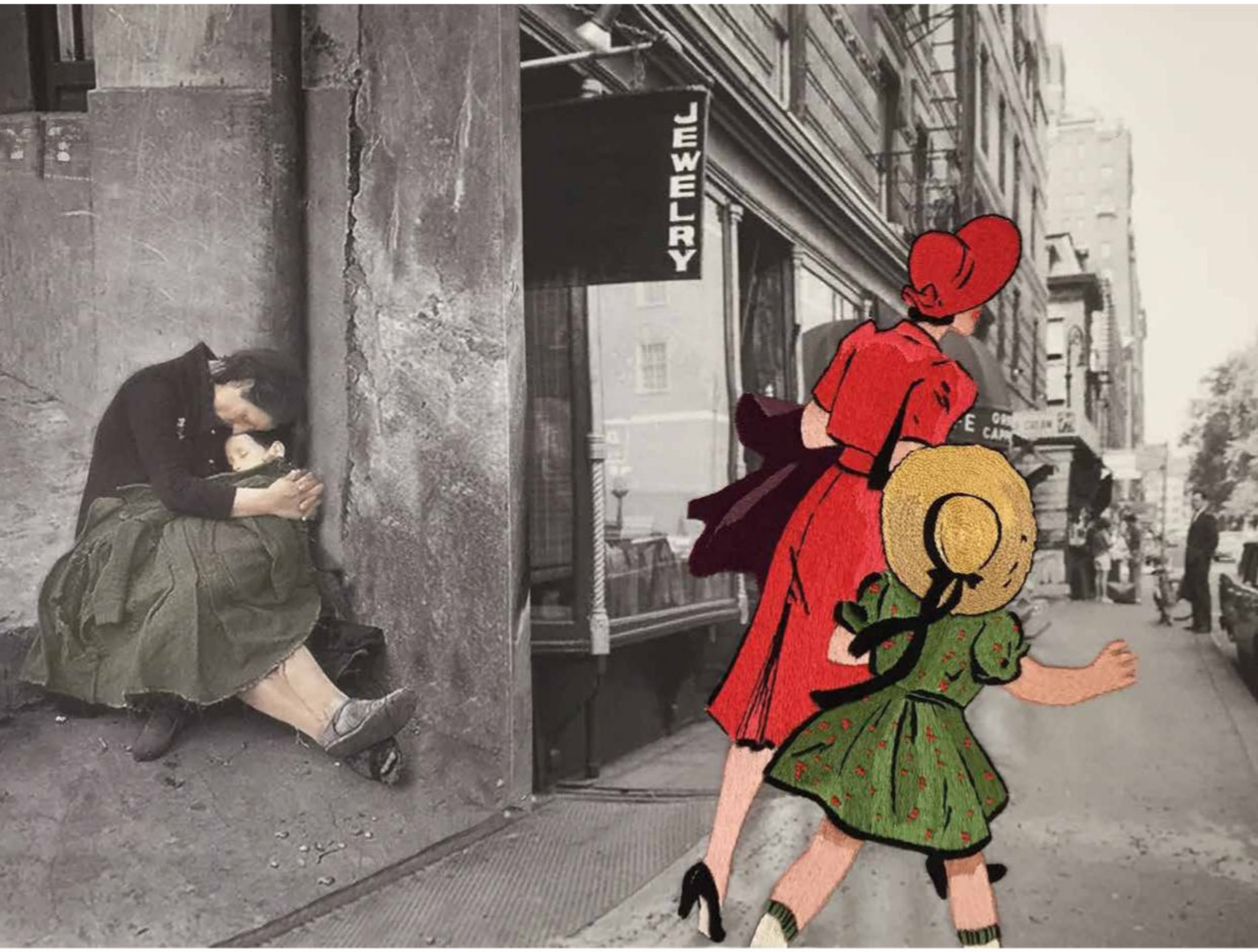




Top left: The first three images are from *The Deserts of Inadequacy* series, made from found domestic silverware and second-hand Spanx

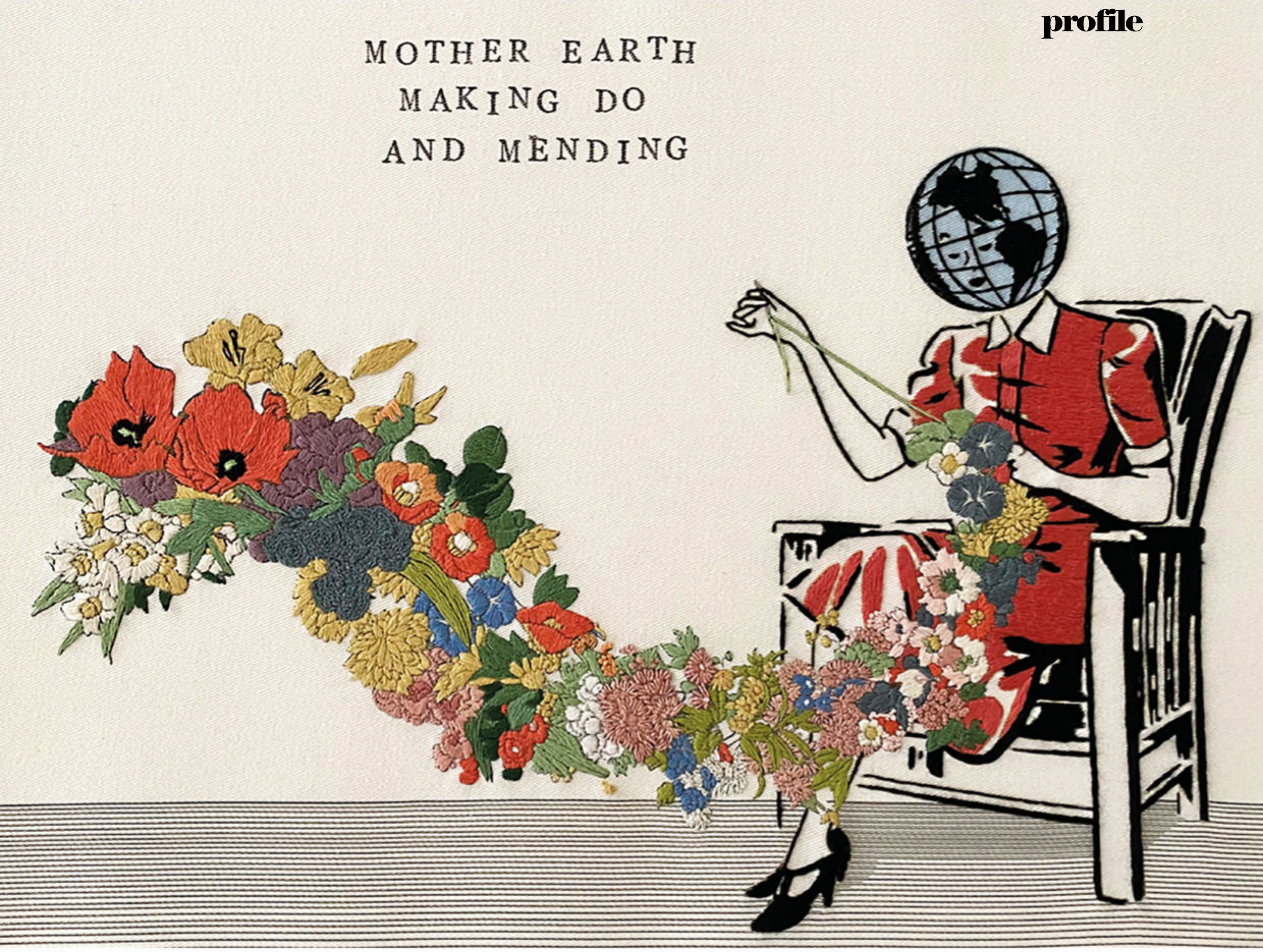
Centre right: *On the Rag* hot water bottle cover, with embroidery and quilting, with stitches taken from a sampler McIntosh sewed as a child

Right: *My Handbag, My Choice*, vintage underwear, with a found clasp, appliqué, stitch, padding, pearls, and inside, knitting and crochet tools



conscientious OBJECTOR

Robin McCarthy, who addresses some of the biggest issues of the day through her art, such as racism, gun-crime and the environment, says selling her works is not the be-all and end-all: she makes because she must



■ ROBIN MCCARTHY IS AN ARTIST with a conscience that pricks. A maker of satirical collages that raise questions about contemporary responses to racism, homelessness, gun-crime, gender, body-image and environmentalism, it's a practice that, for McCarthy, functions as a kind of catharsis. 'In a way it's how I cope with what's going on in the world.'

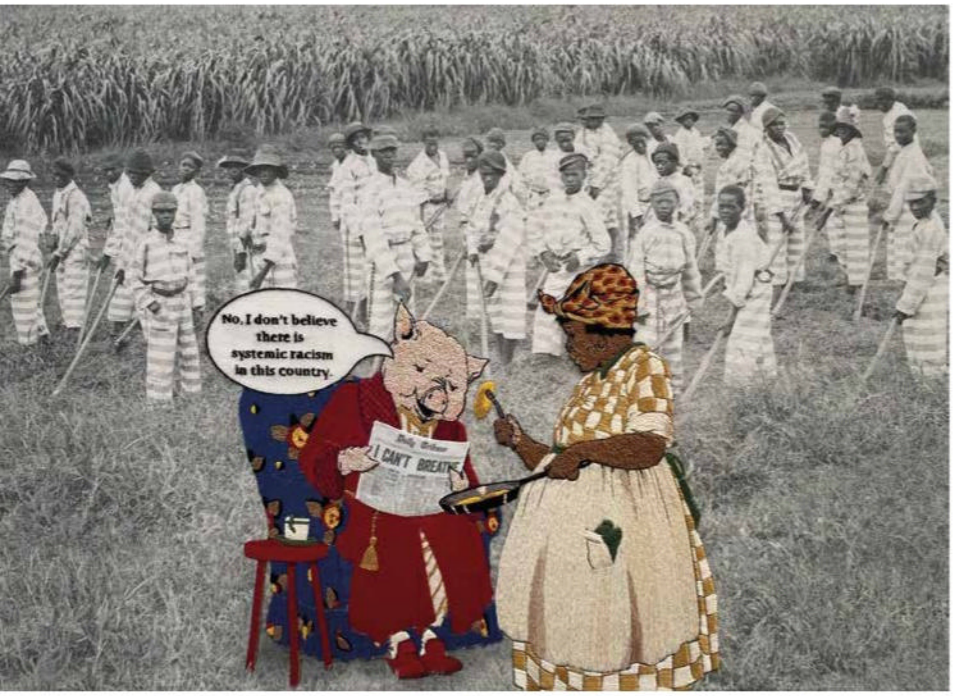
Quasi-surrealist, often quirky and sometimes darkly humorous, these gloriously off-beat images seem to tune into the current *zeitgeist* for recycled photographs and illustrations from 1940s and 1950s knitting patterns, adverts and children's books, now ubiquitous on greetings cards and social media posts. Seemingly familiar, McCarthy's images lull the viewer with an impression of nostalgic benignity. It is a subtle sleight of hand, and intentional, for McCarthy wants people to engage with the work and the issues that it promulgates. 'I've noticed that often people will say, "Oh, that's pretty", and then they'll do a sort of double-take and think, "Wait a minute, there's more to this".'

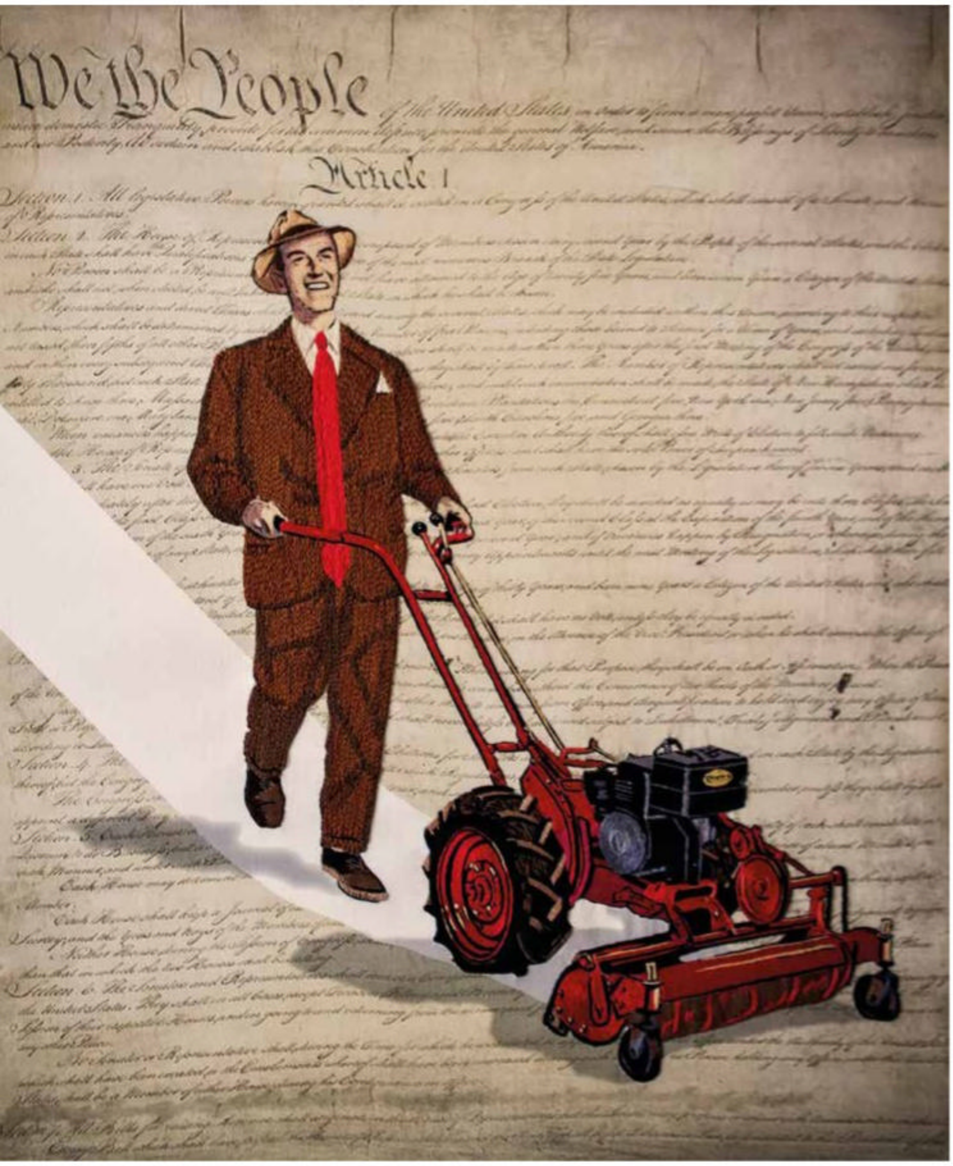
And there is. In the tradition of the great pre-digital collage artists like John Heartfield, Hannah Höch and Barbara Kruger, McCarthy is not only a deft manipulator of collaged imagery, but also a highly-talented embroiderer, a craft that she, rather surprisingly, works into her pieces. Evoking vague memories of 1970s souvenir postcards from Spain of Flamenco dancers with embroidered dresses and three-dimensional frills, McCarthy's decision to embellish teeters towards the kitsch.

Struggling to come up with a logical rationale for such ornamentation, McCarthy laughs and says: 'I can't tell you how many times I've asked myself that question. It could be that, especially in person, they get this beautiful texture and dimension which adds life to them. But mostly it's the craft I enjoy.'

Whatever the reason, with its elegantly restrained interplay of the technological and the hand-made, it's a juxtaposition that works.

She was born and raised in Southern California (where she has since returned to live) till the age of ten when her father's job ('He sold helicopters') took them to Canada. McCarthy remembers her childhood in the 1950s in the Los Angeles suburbs as a happy one. 'Now, Los Angeles just sprawls. Then it was much less developed, lots of orange groves. And it was safe to go outside.' Belied by a gentleness of voice, face and demeanour


No, I don't believe there is systemic racism in this country.
I CAN'T BREATHE



(akin to that of Doris Day), McCarthy is too politically aware to lapse into sentimental complacency. 'I hate to say this but as a white middle-class person, for me as a child, it was an innocent time. But it wasn't that innocent really: women weren't respected and it was the same with people of colour. And I feel so bad that there's so much whiteness in my work but I can't tell you how hard it's been, in fact it's almost impossible, to find similar imagery of people of colour.'

Responding to current events, such as with *The Disaffected*, an image of a child standing on the edge of a playground with a bomb strapped to his back ('there had been another school attack') or *A Day at the Beach*, where a woman sits on a beach watching her child play among the rubbish ('someday the beaches will be covered in trash') or *The Great Divide*, showing a mother and daughter hurrying past a Depression-era rendition of a woman and child huddled in a corner ('the homeless situation in LA is devastating, it's everywhere. It's heart-wrenching to me'), McCarthy talks a lot about the struggle she has with how best to communicate her ideas.

'I'm thinking about making a piece involving the Native American struggles, but again I don't want to seem like I'm trying to appropriate their culture. It's tricky.' Perhaps that's where the embroidery comes in, giving her permission to sit with the images, the stories, that she's put together, and think about them as she sews. 'I find it to be such a Zen experience, everything else disappears. I usually sit at my kitchen table and sew and I'm just focused on one stitch at a time.'

McCarthy began sewing at an early age, making dolls' clothes with her best friend Lesley. 'She was a couple of years older than me so hers were more sophisticated. Mine were just little rectangles folded in half with a hole for the head.' Dress-making was a hobby that persisted into adulthood and soon became a

Page 22: *The Great Divide*, 24in × 20in. Digital collage, printed on fabric with embroidered embellishments

Page 23: *Mother Earth Mending,* 16.5in × 13in. Digital collage, printed on fabric with embroidered embellishments

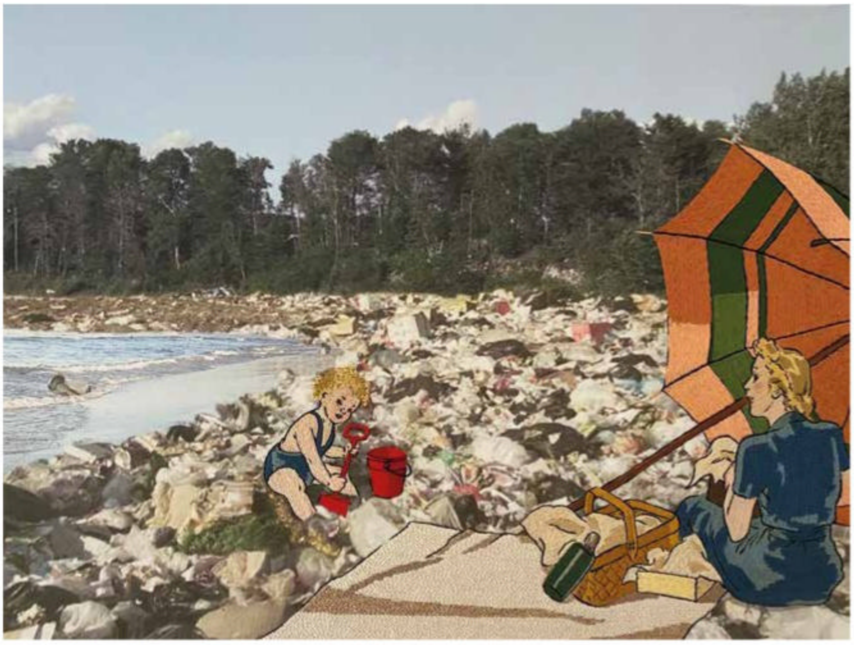
This page, top left: *Wilful Ignorance,* 23in × 18in. The background photo is a public domain image of a chain gang of black children, soon after the Civil War. Digital collage, printed on fabric with embroidered embellishments

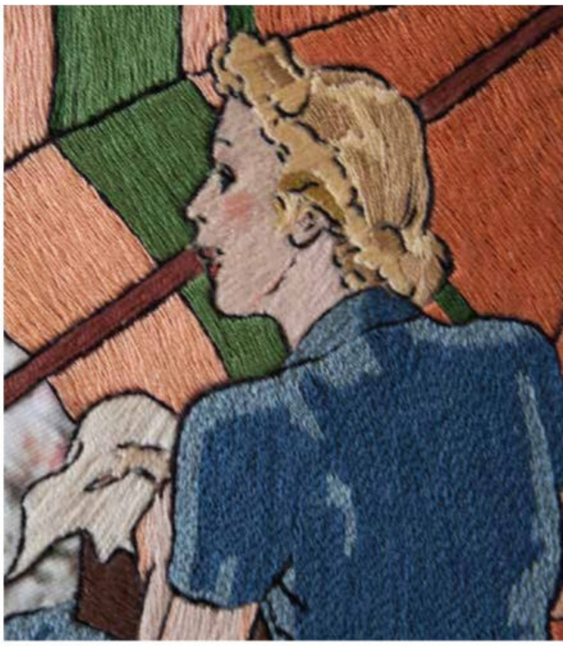
Left: *We The People*, 28in × 22in. Digital collage, printed on fabric with embroidered embellishments. The background is a reproduction of the preamble to the US constitution

Opposite page, top left: *A Day at the Beach*. 24in × 20in. Digital collage, printed on fabric with embroidered embellishments

Centre right: *Waiting*, 8in ×10in. Found photo printed on fabric with embroidered embellishments

Bottom right: *Imposters*, 12in ×18in. Digital collage, printed on fabric with embroidered embellishments
Plus a detail of embroidery





‘Seemingly familiar, McCarthy’s images lull the viewer with an impression of nostalgic benignity’

fully-fledged career. ‘I’d always made my own clothes and people began asking me where I’d got them. My boyfriend at the time was quite the entrepreneur and said “You should take orders”. So I went to school and learnt pattern-making.’ After spending ten years as a clothes designer McCarthy realised that her heart was no longer in it. ‘It’s not a very nice business: it’s very cut throat, people steal designs and it’s hard to get paid and I realised that my passion for it wasn’t there anymore.’

Harking back to the freer, more expressive, tenets of her original degree – ‘my major was in art and philosophy, a terrible combination as a career for financial security’ – McCarthy was in search of something more meaningful.

‘I knew that I still loved to sew and I started noticing people were doing interesting things with embroidery outside of tea towels and I started experimenting.’

That crossing-over perpetrated by certain textile artists, a blurring of the lines between art and craft, the domestic and the technological is a movement that McCarthy enthuses about. ‘I loved, and still love, being part of a group of people, men and women, who are taking embroidery, crochet, all the fibre arts, out of the “women’s work” realm and into the fine art world. I think it is really exciting.’

Having ‘embroidered a lot in college in the 1970s, I had some skills’, it was the opportunity to study with Susan Hill – who led the embroidery of all the linens for Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* – that took McCarthy’s technical and conceptual adroitness to another level. ‘It pushed me into experimenting outside the box.’

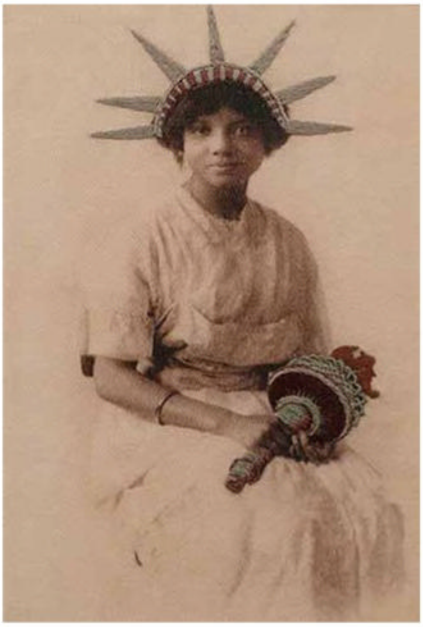
After closing-down her clothing design business, McCarthy has made her living as a graphic designer, a job from which she’s soon to retire, allowing her time to concentrate solely on her fine art textiles. Confessing to not being good at marketing herself, she has yet to find a ‘place’ for her work. Having exhibited her first dozen pieces in a gallery in Santa Barbara and been part of numerous group shows, she has also done some editorial work for a digital weekly journal called *OppArt/The Nation*.

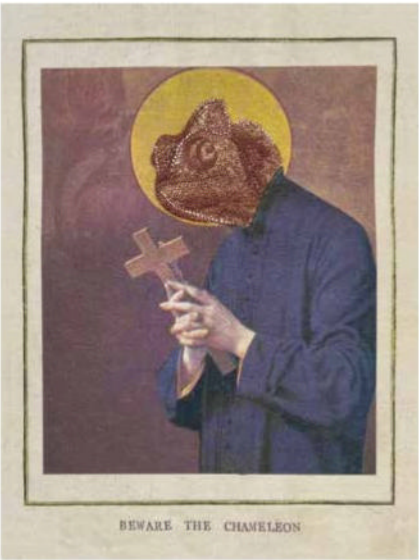
McCarthy recently persuaded a friend to project a blown-up version of one of her images on a wall in LA. ‘It’s an embroidery of a man with a lawnmower mowing down our constitution. It’s too detailed to really tell, so it didn’t work. And it was only up for a few minutes. It was like a kind of Jenny Holzer.’

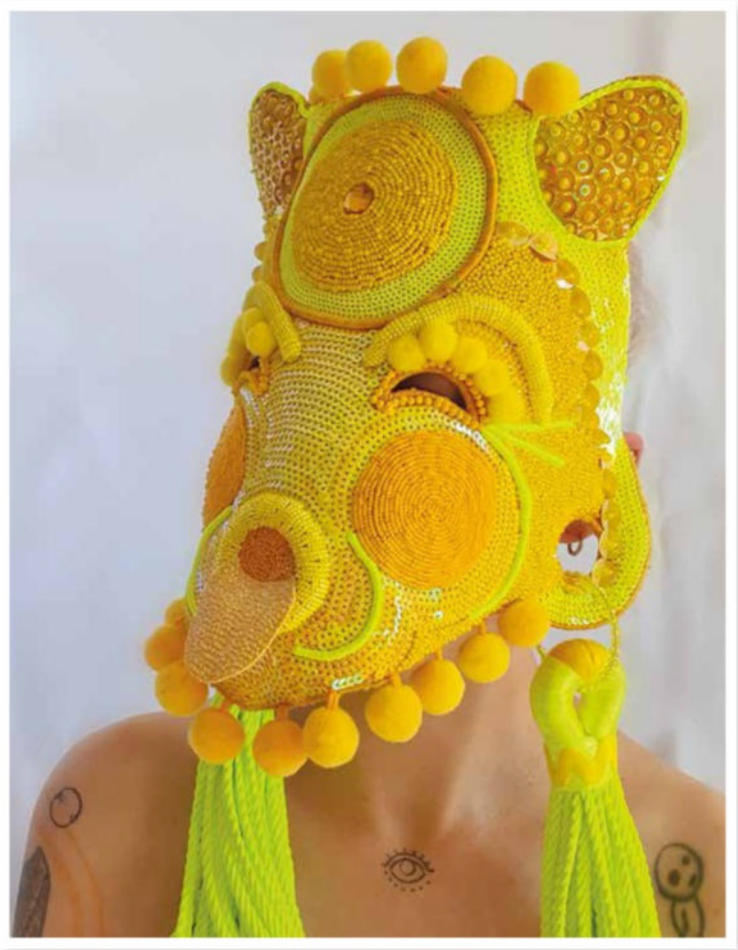
Realistic about the chances of supporting herself through her fine art practice – ‘it’s a really tough sell and they take so long’ – McCarthy is, nonetheless, determined to continue. ‘It would be great if things sell, but in a sense I don’t care. The real reason I’m doing this is coming from a deeper place. I’m using my voice. There’s a Joni Mitchell quote about painters painting and how maybe they get famous or maybe nobody ever sees what they do but they keep painting anyway because they must.’

Ellen Bell

ROBINMCCARTHYARTWORK.COM





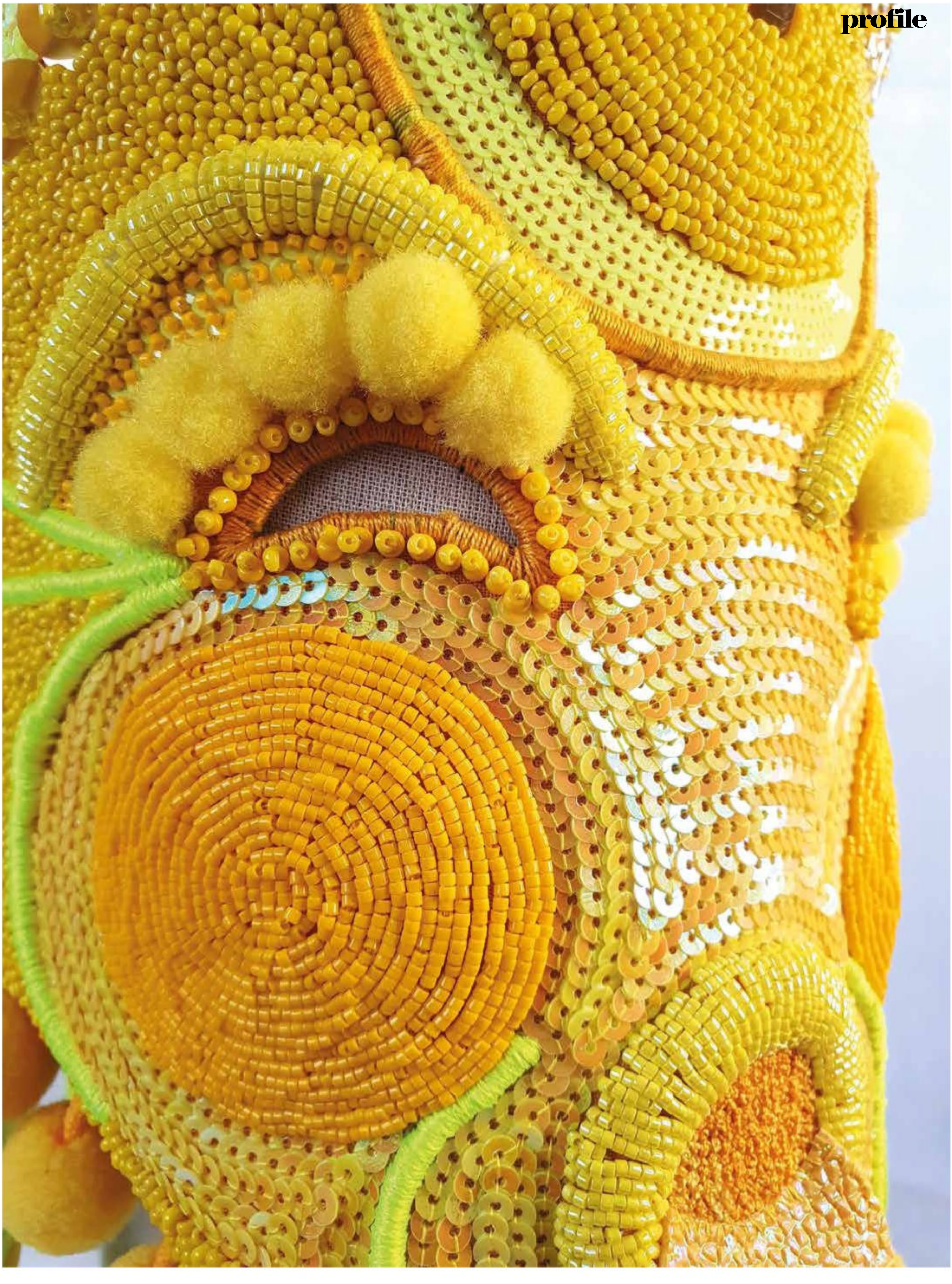


& of life death

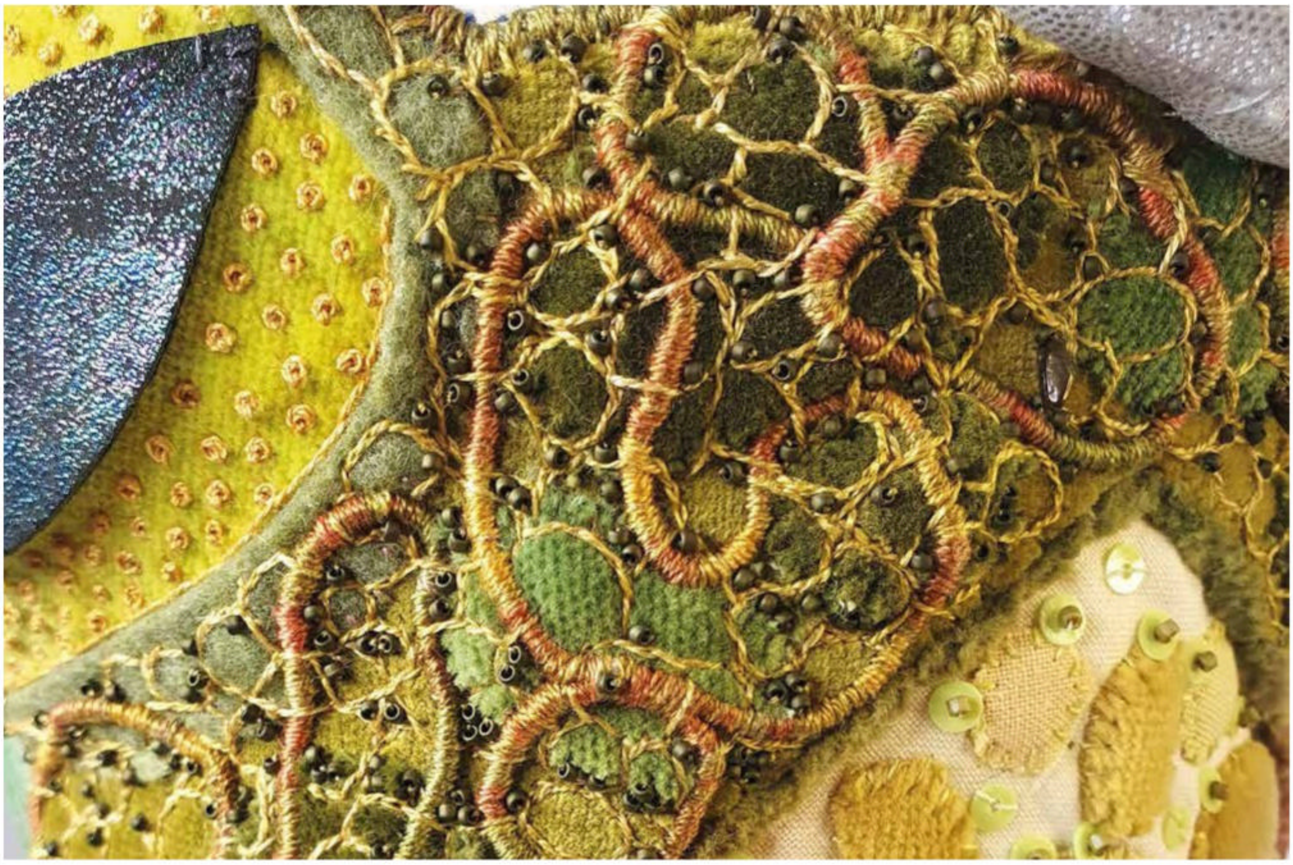
Kate Tume, 42, lost her beloved husband Nicky to cancer in 2021. It marked a dramatic departure in her work as she began creating vibrant embellished death masks

This Widow's Work is textile artist Kate Tume's Instagram strapline. It's an evocative phrase that stirs up images of a Kåthe Kollwitz-esque woman cloaked in black and stooped over some sewing. And yet Tume is just 42 and is currently in the process of making a vibrant collection of gloriously-embellished masks. Born out of grief over the death of her beloved husband Nicky in June 2021, these are Tume's death masks. A sorrow that's still palpably, achingly present, Tume talks of his dying with a sometimes halting voice. 'He was an endurance athlete, the fittest person ever. He'd done an Iron Man in 2019. He never drank or smoked. There were no symptoms; he just woke up one night with severe liver pain. It was colon cancer and it had metastasised into his liver. That was in November 2020. They said he may have two years but he died within seven months.'

An activist artist with a deep spiritual connection to the natural world, Tume's practice, prior to her partner's death, involved the making of richly-embroidered portraits of animals. Painstakingly-researched and embedded with often esoteric references to colour symbolism and religious and mythological iconography, these images raised questions about species loss and the lack of reverence for the sacredness of life – phenomena exacerbated, Tume believes, by the continuing effects of white supremacy and colonialism. Her husband's diagnosis



'She did still make, reverting back to the sewing of her childhood, charting and stitching three grief pillows'



ALL WE HAV
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Previous pages 26-27: *Magical Mythical Omnipotent Child* or *Joy* mask, a celebratory, jubilant 'death mask' more akin to the masks worn by shamans

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Worked in various materials are Tume's *Holly King*, *Portal*, *Sensitivity* and *Oak King* death masks

This page, above: Detail of Kate Tume's *Portal* mask, demonstrating the wealth of stitches and embellishments that go into each artwork

Left: In profound grief, Tume still wanted to create but reverted to the cross-stitch of her childhood, enjoying the mechanics of charting and completing three grief pillows

('the love of my life') brought this thriving practice (at the time Tume had over 20,000 Instagram followers) to an almost complete stop. 'I was working on a snake piece based on a real snake I'd encountered during an artist's residency in Costa Rica in 2020. I feel now that it was a harbinger as snakes represent change and transformation. All the creative decisions about the piece were made and finishing it was cathartic. But after that I didn't have it in me anymore.' Tume describes it as having 'the creative energy sucked out of me'. But she did still make, reverting back to the sewing of her childhood. 'I charted and cross-stitched three grief pillows.'

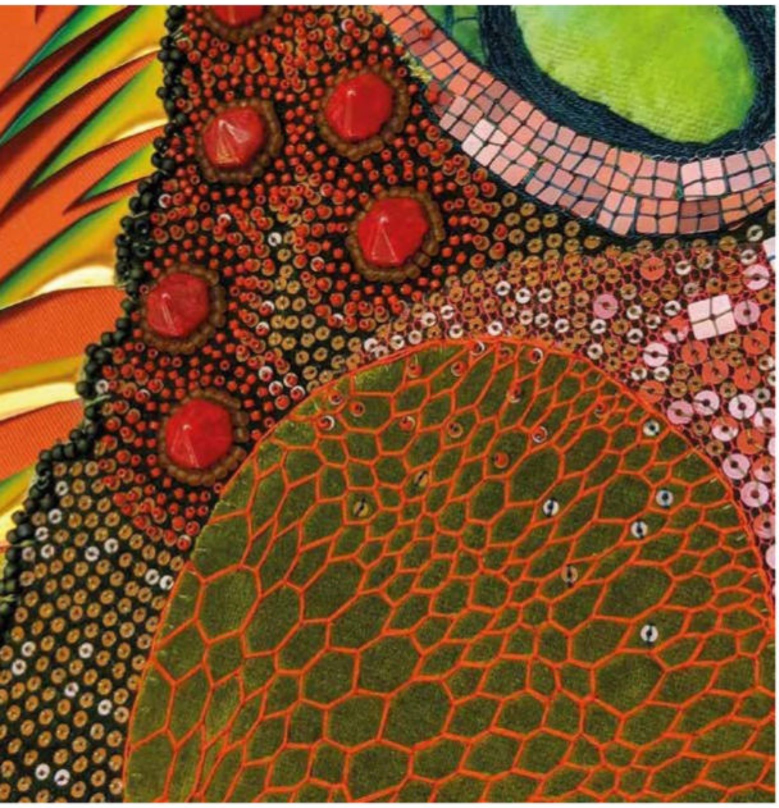
'Cross-stitch was the first thing I ever learnt to do. My mum taught me. She did all the cross-stitch kits. My childhood bedroom wall was covered in the cross-stitching she'd done. As a child I got my own graph paper and I used to go through the Jo Verso books. I remember making a map of Africa because I was really interested in Egypt.'

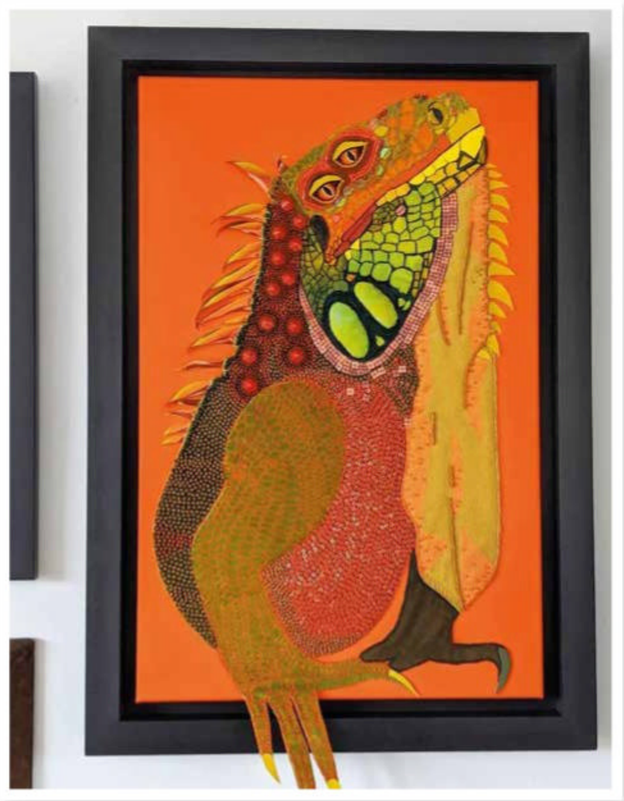
With its sense of establishing order, of pinning down a design and then of working within prescribed lines, for Tume charting and cross-stitching was a therapeutic activity. 'There was something about charting-up, of buying the cotton and using bright colours. It was what my hands could do while being with Nicky on the sofa or in bed with him. They were my literal tears. And now they're on my bed.'

For all its still newness, Tume speaks so eloquently, so feelingly, of her grief and about Western culture's struggle to embrace or even acknowledge it. 'We're such a death-phobic culture. Nicky was only 41 when he died, so I was a young widow. Our society is not set up to talk about death or grief and yet we're surrounded by grief and death and violence. We don't make spaces for people to talk about these things. And it's not OK.'

Her husband's death was not only an emotional catastrophe for Tume but a physical one too. She had to sell their 'forever home' and move to the flat she now owns in Worthing. 'I'd already been exploring ecological and environmental grief in my work but in a transpersonal, political way. Nicky's death thrust me so profoundly into it and this time it was personal. It's like the volume was turned up. It completely rearranged me and a lot of extraneous stuff just fell away. I felt very present, very awake.' It's an exposure Tume believes has made her work more truthful.

The idea of making death masks had been fermenting in Tume's mind for some years. 'I didn't make them because I knew I'd have to step off the hamster-wheel, that internalised capitalism that makes us feel we must continually produce so





Top: *We Will Suppress You* artwork, above right, and detail from the artwork, above left, part of Tume's portfolio before the death of her husband

Above: Tume working on a project in her flat in Worthing, having had to move out of the family house which she thought of as her 'forever home'

Opposite page: *Instinct is Worth a Thousand Years of Memory*. Kate was working on this piece when her husband Nicky died and found making decisions about, and finishing the piece was cathartic but after that felt as though the creative energy had been sucked out of her. The piece is based on a snake she encountered on an artist's residency in Costa Rica and she feels it was a harbinger as snakes represent change and transformation

'I love making. I can't wait to make'

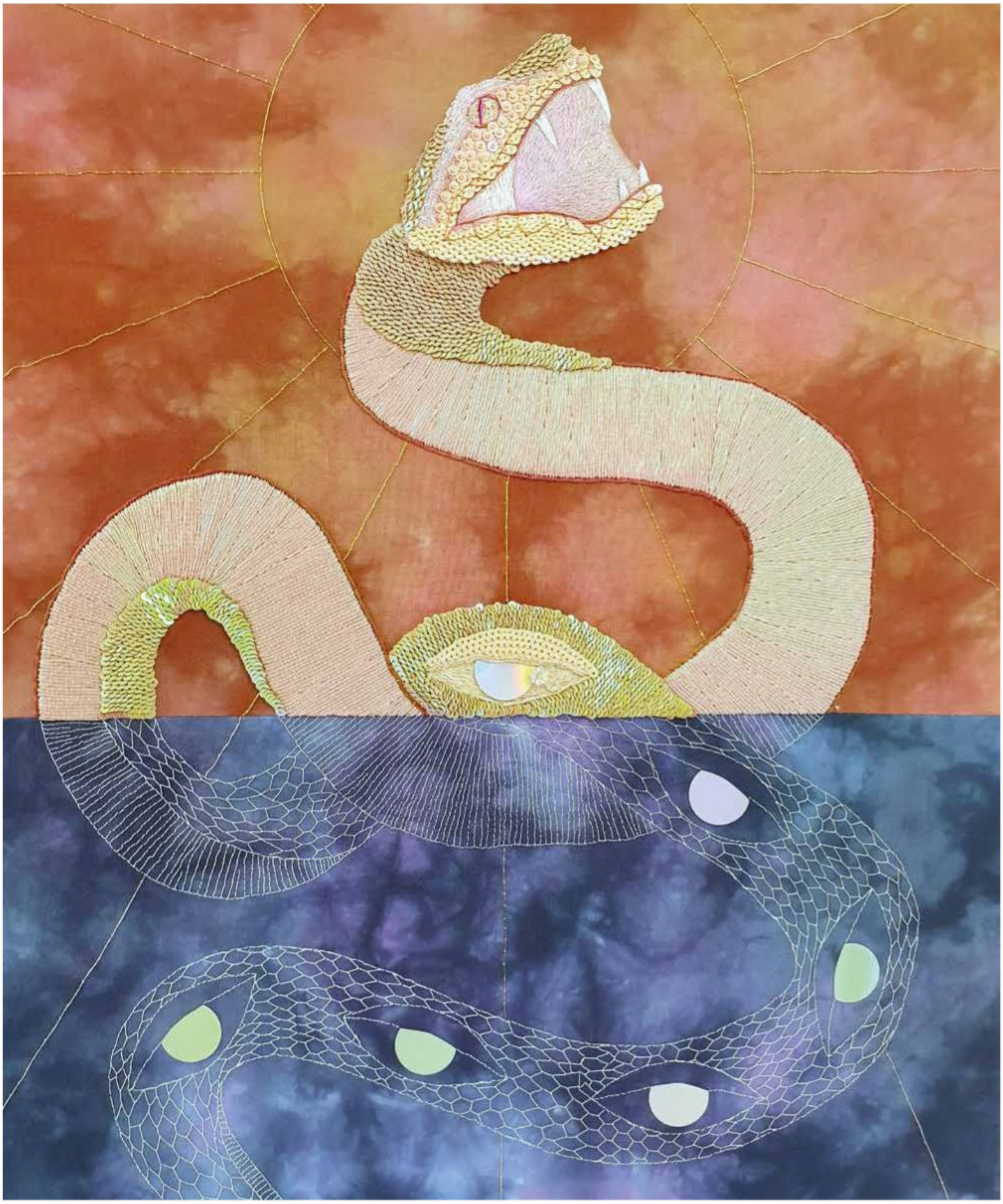
as to have value. And I knew that if I tried something different potentially it wouldn't be good; it would be messy. After Nicky's death I thought: I'm going to do this now. And somehow I just knew how to make them.'

A world away from the funereal masks of 17th, 18th and 19th century Europe, sculpted or moulded directly from a dead person's face, Tume's masks are celebratory, jubilant and more akin to those worn by shamans summoning up the animal spirits they represent. Seeing them as emblematic of a form of collective healing, Tume talks of working collaboratively with creative photographers and performance artists and of staging interactive shows in which visitors can wear the masks.

Now sculptural rather than flat, Tume's working methods are the same. She explains: 'I still make them on a slate-frame. The *Frog* mask was the first one and the *Joy* one the most recent. They're all made the same way, detached from the frame and couched and stitched over heavy wire, with padding to give them the three-dimensions. It's the same technique I used for stump work. I learn as I do it.'

Not formally trained, Tume describes herself as having 'always been creative' but that 'school knocked it out of me.' Yearning from the age of seven to be a fashion designer but lacking any teacher encouragement to nurture her creativity, Tume opted for a degree in fashion promotion and illustration. 'There was very little Illustration, it was mostly writing. So I skewed towards fashion journalism thinking I might write for fashion magazines; but I hated the industry very quickly and ended up in fashion retail.'

Tume and her husband's decision to move to Worthing in 2013 was the catalyst for her practice. Despite all those internalised voices telling her that they weren't economically viable, Tume began experimenting with some sewn pieces. 'I just got to the point where I thought I don't care how long they take, I just



want to make them.' Working through all the Royal School of Needlework stitch books, Tume taught herself to embroider.

A solo show in Brighton's ONCA Gallery's annual Remembrance Day for Lost Species in 2017 was a turning point for her. 'I hadn't had any experience of talking about my work so the private view really stretched me. Seeing people interact with my work, it was explosive.'

Tume is ambivalent about the role of embroidery in her practice. She comments: 'It's kind of incidental. I don't mean that it's insignificant, it's part of its character, its value, but the work is not about the embroidery, though it's a useful way for people to come into it.'

What she is certain about is the fun she gets from doing it, particularly with her mask collection. 'I love making. I can't wait to make. I just want to be there in my flat for hours and hours making. I'm very lucky I have a head full of ideas.'

Ellen Bell

madebymothereagle.com
Instagram mother_eagle_arts

BRIGHT IDEAS

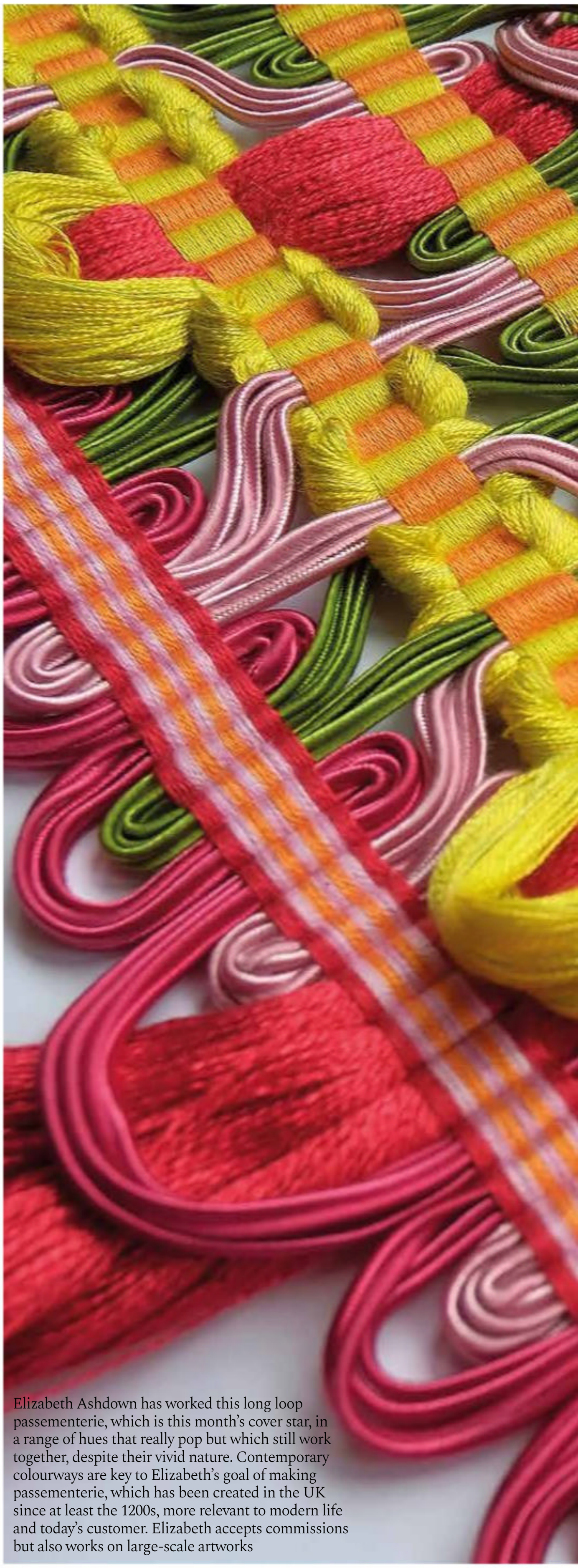
Elizabeth Ashdown is not only keeping the ancient art of passementerie alive but making it relevant to modern-day life

What is passementerie?
Passementerie is the art of creating ornate and elaborate braids, trimmings, fringes, ribbons, trims, tassels, rosettes, buttons and cord-spinning for interior and fashion design. Passementerie can be hand-woven, embroidered, knitted, knotted… the crafts involved are very wide-ranging. The term 'passementerie' is French, but the craft has been created in the UK since at least the 1200s; originally it was often referred to as lace or 'narrow weaving'. The centre of production at one point was the City of London (as a coincidence my studio is in the City of London and I am the only passementerie artist in the City today). The Tudors were huge fans of passementerie. Henry VIII even employed two dedicated trimmings makers in the Great Wardrobe to produce the latest styles for the royal household.

Passementerie has been listed as an endangered craft by the Heritage Crafts Association. What do you think is the solution to keeping passementerie alive?
Reinvention of the skills, techniques, materials and contexts for the craft is paramount. My work is not about historical re-creation, nor is it about heritage preservation for the sake of posterity. I believe that in order for the craft of passementerie to thrive and become relevant today, the skills, forms, aesthetics and contexts of the craft must be made contemporary and exciting in order to appeal to a modern sensibility. My practice radically changes the use and application of passementerie through celebrating the craft form in a unique manner. Through innovating with colour, pattern, technique, material and scale, my practice focuses on promoting and appreciating passementerie for what it is – a true art form.

There is often friction in the world of embroidery as to whether it is a craft or an art. How do you feel about this in relation to your own field?
I would say that textiles practice is both an art and a craft. I don't believe in a hierarchy between fine art and craft. To me a piece of art needs to both be beautifully crafted as well as being beautiful to look at. The 'craft' of making my work is just as important as how the finished artwork looks.

Can you describe where you work?
My studio is at The Experimental Weave Lab (TEWL) in the City of London, which I also co-curate and run. The Lab is housed within a



Elizabeth Ashdown has worked this long loop passementerie, which is this month's cover star, in a range of hues that really pop but which still work together, despite their vivid nature. Contemporary colourways are key to Elizabeth's goal of making passementerie, which has been created in the UK since at least the 1200s, more relevant to modern life and today's customer. Elizabeth accepts commissions but also works on large-scale artworks

'I love bold colours that work together to highlight, rather than fight, one another'

fantastic former church hall built in 1957, right in the heart of the City. We are surrounded by insurance and financial buildings. Our building is owned by the Clothworkers' Company who have very generously sponsored our programme to run. The Experimental Weave Lab is the City of London's first contemporary, innovative weaving season. TEWL initially supported a six-month season of short and long-term weaving residencies, talks and workshops culminating in a final exhibition on September 22. The season explored the experimental, interstitial spaces that weavers work within throughout UK craft, research, art, design and industry. Over the course of the residency programme, TEWL has supported 12 professional weavers to create exploratory and experimental work. Since our residency programme ended, at the moment there are three weavers working from the studio until the end of January 2023. Then the building is due to be knocked down. TEWL will continue in some fashion; we are in the stages of planning the next instalment. The City of London used to be the centre of passementerie production in the UK and all this heritage was lost, until I came along.

Have you always made things?

I have always made things, painted and drawn. Ever since I could hold a crayon I have been making and drawing. My interest in textiles started when I was in primary school. I joined the after-school textiles club and have been hooked ever since.

Do you have any early memories of passementerie?

Not passementerie as such, but I do have early memories of playing around with ribbons, fabric scraps and the contents of my mum's sewing box.

What was your experience of formal training?

I studied a BA (Hons) in Textile Design at Central Saint Martins and then an MA in Textiles at the Royal College of Art, specialising in woven textile design. I don't have any formal training within passementerie; I am self-taught within the craft. There isn't a 'passementerie school'.

How did you fall for passementerie?

I was introduced to the art form when I was studying for my BA in textile design. As part of a project we had to create a small collection of hand-woven ribbons. The project was only around 10 days long and the weaving was very simple, but as soon as I tried weaving on a small scale, I was hooked. I started to undertake a lot of research in the craft and I realised how much creative potential working on a small scale offered. I also came to realise that hardly anyone was working with passementerie in a contemporary way and I felt that so much could be done with the techniques, skills and materials in a new and fresh way.

What materials and equipment do you use in your art?

I have three looms that each have a name: Big Bertha, Timothy and Dorothy. Big Bertha is the loom that I use the most. This loom is probably from the late 1960s–early 1970s and was designed to weave rugs, which means the loom is very well built and study. Big Bertha is a floor loom and is controlled by foot pedals and joyfully, there is no computer involved. The other most important equipment is my cord spinner and my dyeing equipment. All of the silk yarns I use within my work are hand-dyed. I've just been lucky enough to buy a skein winder (a very important tool for preparing yarn for dyeing, and the equipment is very hard to find). This winder is Edwardian and is in beautiful condition considering its age.

Is there a range of established patterns and types of passementerie that you follow?

Passementerie designs are usually based on historical designs originating from the late 1700s into the 1800s. It is rare to see a 'brand new' passementerie design, even within contemporary interior design. Commercially passementerie designs don't change that much – it is usually the colours that change with the seasons. A lot of my work is inspired by designs from the 1800s. I usually start by replicating a traditional design from the past in my colours and then I build the design from there, exploring different scales, variations, patterns and materials.

What is it like to pass on these skills to your students?

I really enjoy teaching passementerie. I've been teaching online and in person for the last three years and my students' creativity never ceases to amaze me. I actually teach a lot of embroiderers, either amateurs or professionals, and these learners find so many similarities between passementerie and embroidery. I am always amazed by how inventive learners are. I've had everyone from ceramicists, to home dressmakers, jewellery designers and costume designers and everyone develops the use of passementerie in such an interesting way.

What is in your mind when creating a passementerie artwork?

This depends on the project. If I am creating an artwork for a client, I will have already worked out the design beforehand on paper, a client proof. When I come to the loom I know exactly what I am weaving, so in this instance it is just a case of getting the piece woven. However, if I am creating a self-initiated work I spend a lot of time exploring and experimenting on the loom. I will often set up warps in a particular colourway, not knowing what I am going to weave. I start to create explorations and samples, playing around with different materials and patterns. I usually get a 'feeling' from a design, which means that I have an inkling that I'm on to an exciting thing. I then continue to explore the design, working it up into something 'final'.

Do you create artworks only for commissions?

I create work to commission, but I also create one-off art pieces that I offer up for sale through my website and Instagram.

What size are your artworks?

They are a wide range of sizes. My commissioned pieces tend to vary widely: everything from 15cm x 15cm to 5ft x 3ft. The beauty of passementerie is that it can be treated as a 'component' – made larger, made smaller and connected together until the desired size is achieved.

What inspires you?

I take inspiration from a wide range of sources: colour, pattern and passementerie itself. I keep a lot of sketchbooks that are full of drawings, not of anything in particular, but ideas, colours and patterns that pop into my mind. While working at TEWL, I've been engaged in a self-initiated project that uses the City of London as visual inspiration.

What is the key to good colour combination?

Colour is a very personal and instinctive medium. I love bold, bright and contrasted colour palettes, especially bold colours that work together to highlight, rather than fight, one another. Colour is the most important aspect within my work and I spend a lot of time figuring out how a palette could work together to create a lovely, joyful harmony. If I am working for a client I will usually be working to a set colour palette that the client provides. This can sometimes be challenging as the colours wouldn't necessarily be my choice, however, I can work any colour combination to excellent effect.

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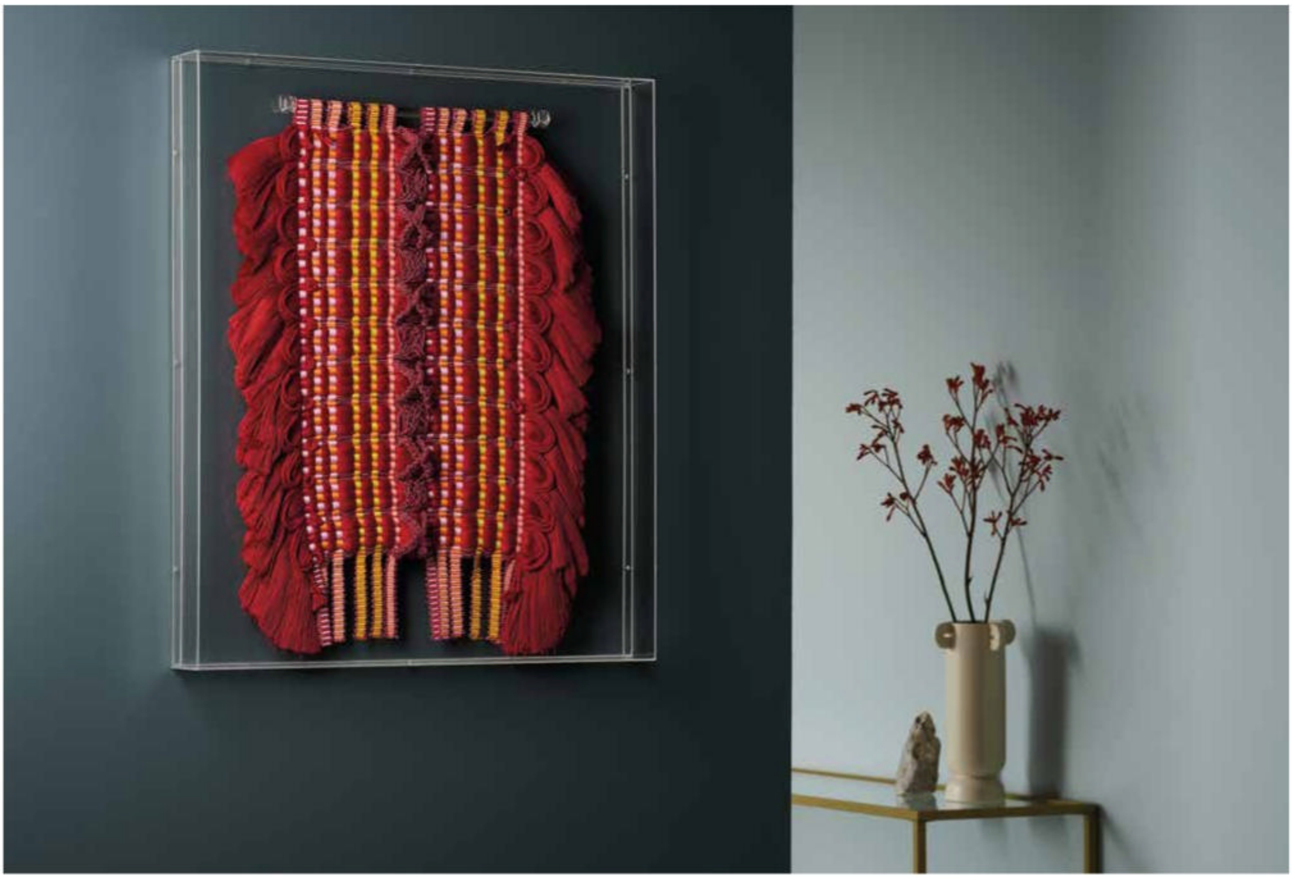
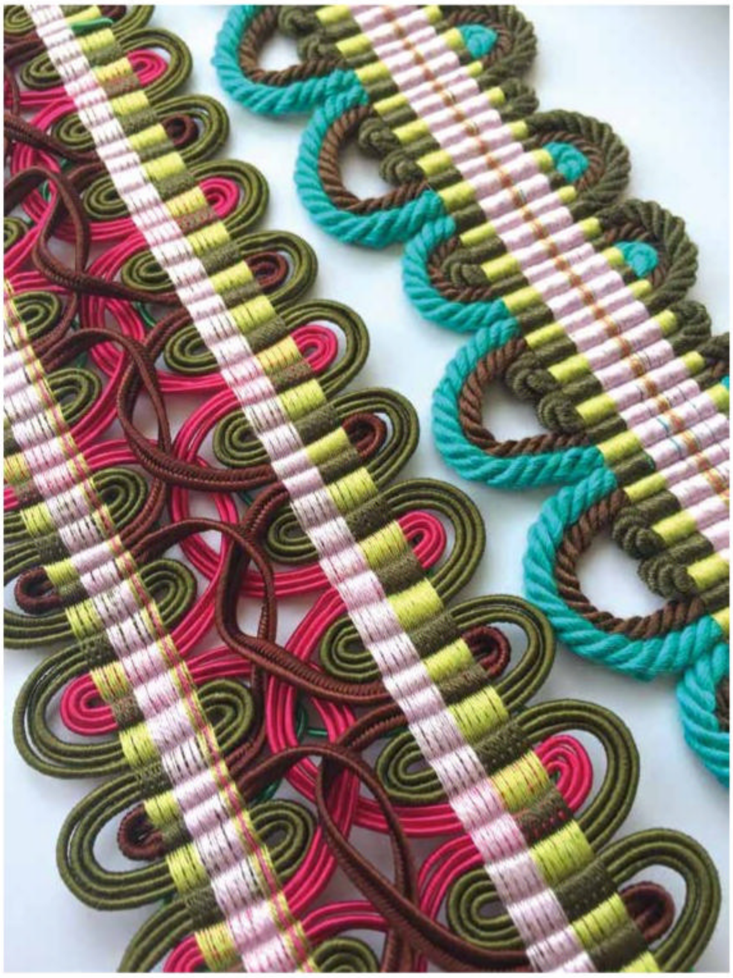
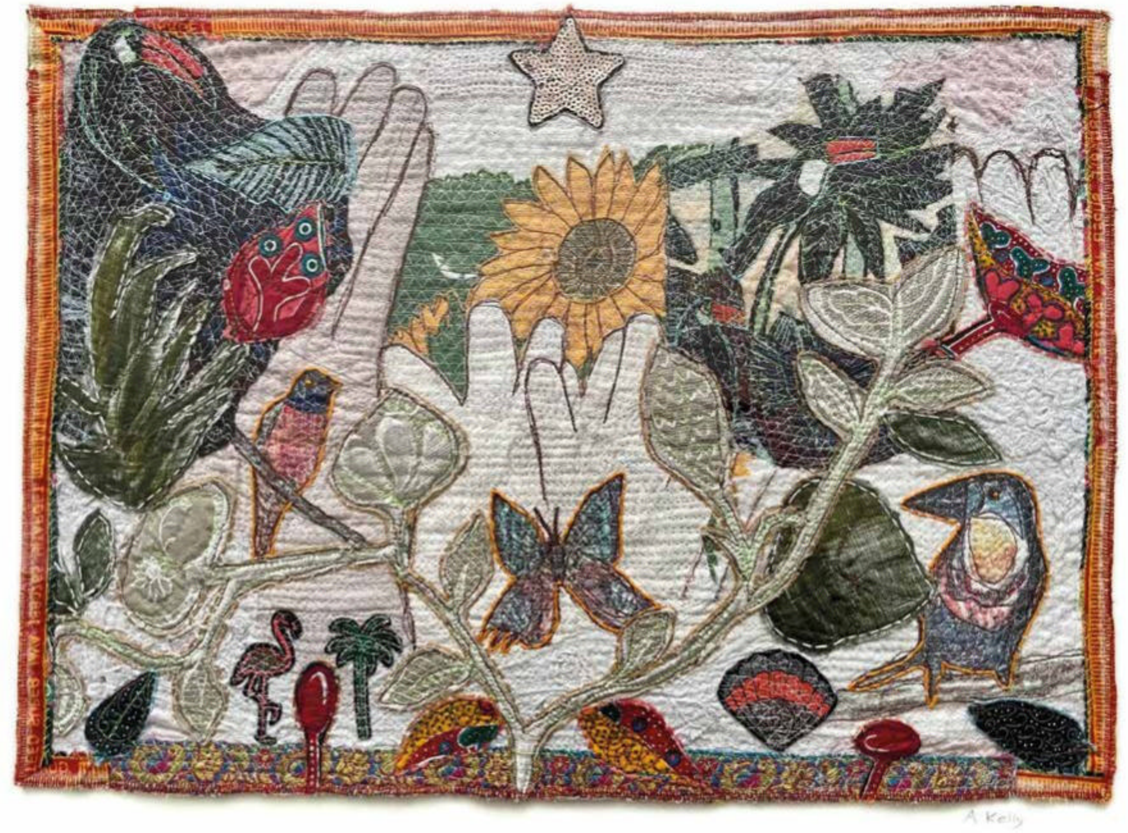




Above: Elizabeth Ashdown with her most-used loom, Big Bertha, which was designed to weave rugs and is consequently very sturdy

Top: This vivid, chunky double passementerie design with fringing takes on a wonderfully contemporary edge when wall-mounted as an artwork in a clear case

Right: These trims look like a mind-boggling undertaking, but on a simpler scale Elizabeth works with students from ceramicists to home dressmakers who all go away with the passementerie bug



ANNE KELLY

REFLECTIONS ON THE ART OF NECESSITY

The Japanese use the term boro for art born out of hardship. Here, Anne Kelly reflects on the art of necessity brought by lockdown and how that made us recycle and reuse

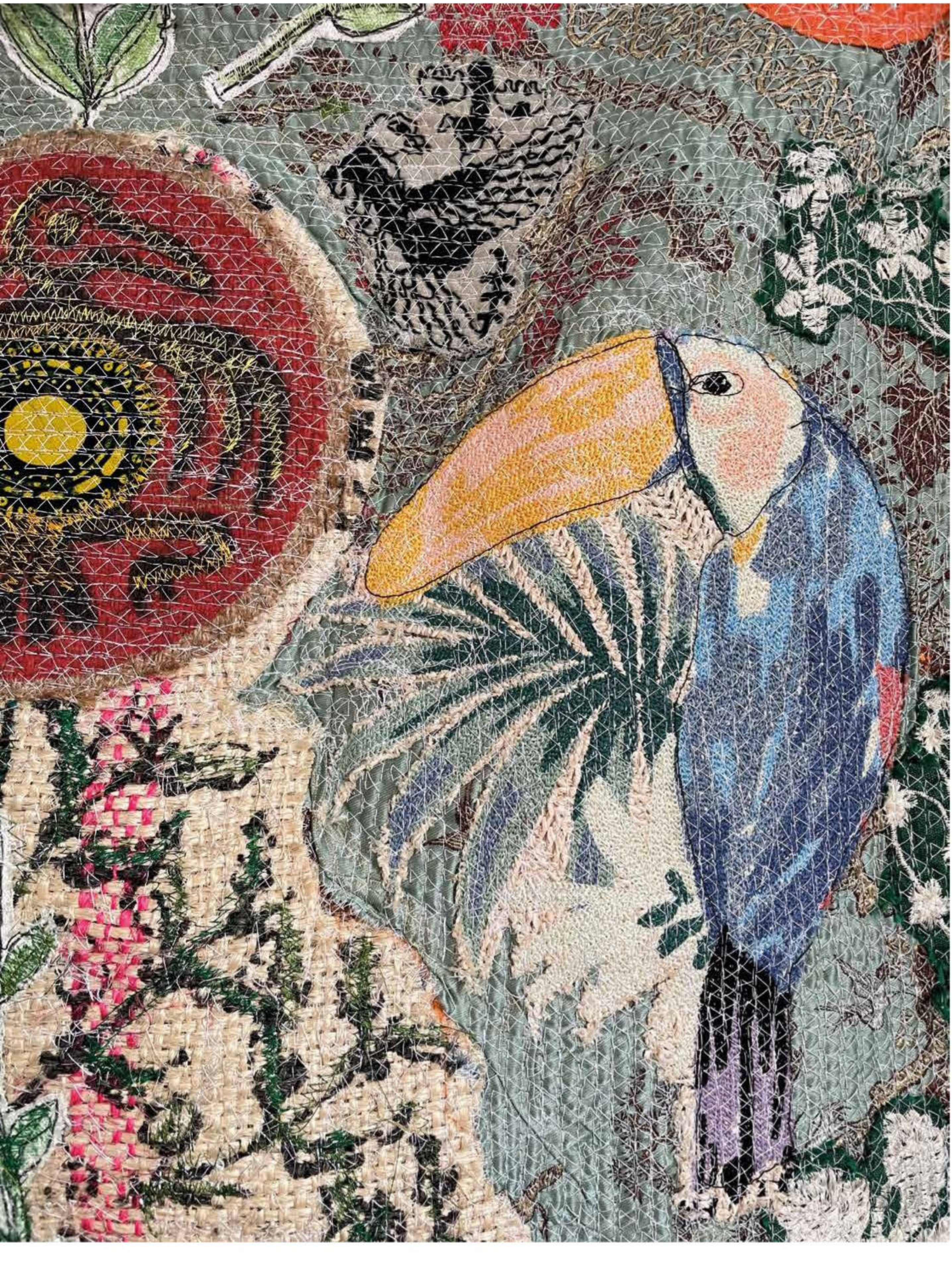
I HAVE ALWAYS USED FOUND and donated textiles from a variety of sources in my practice. During the pandemic, I became increasingly dependent on my 'stash' and other collected items in my studio. Many people commented at the time that I must have loved the lockdown as I was an artist. Actually, the reverse was true. I found it a scary and uncertain time, as all of my teaching was cancelled and postponed, and we hadn't yet made the leap to online courses. During lockdowns, I began making work from existing pieces, slowly adding to them.

I was busy preparing work for my major solo exhibition Well Travelled, which opened at Ruthin Craft Centre in May 2021, after several delays due to the pandemic. It was reviewed in this magazine and was well received. As it was such a large project, I was keen for it to tour, which took a while to organise as galleries were catching up from pre-pandemic commitments. Eventually, the exhibition was programmed for the Harley Gallery, part of the Welbeck Estate in Nottinghamshire, and opens on 24 January, running until 15 March 2023.

I needed to add new work to the exhibition, to replace items that had sold and to meet the space demands of the Harley Gallery. I was also keen to reflect the time and issues that have affected us all since the first exhibition was planned. There are two new pieces based on the pandemic and memory, and two new pieces based on the Amazon rainforest and the global footprint of travel, made using found and recycled materials.

Zoom Family Casket is based on the weekly conversations we had as a family during the pandemic. It is modelled on the Elizabethan embroidered caskets that feature images of flowers and animals, and the sides are decorated with these fragments. The top features work from studies and photographs of my family, with a central image of myself and my husband in a hoop frame. Vignettes of the rest of the family cover the rest of the top and are intertwined with fragments of found embroidery and textiles. All the elements are attached to a 1960s sewing box from a charity furniture shop.

Summer Camp Blanket is a piece about memories, which were especially in focus and poignant during the lockdown. It is made of a recycled quilt top, with hand-stitched elements portraying different aspects of past summer holidays, mounted on the torn and patched squares of



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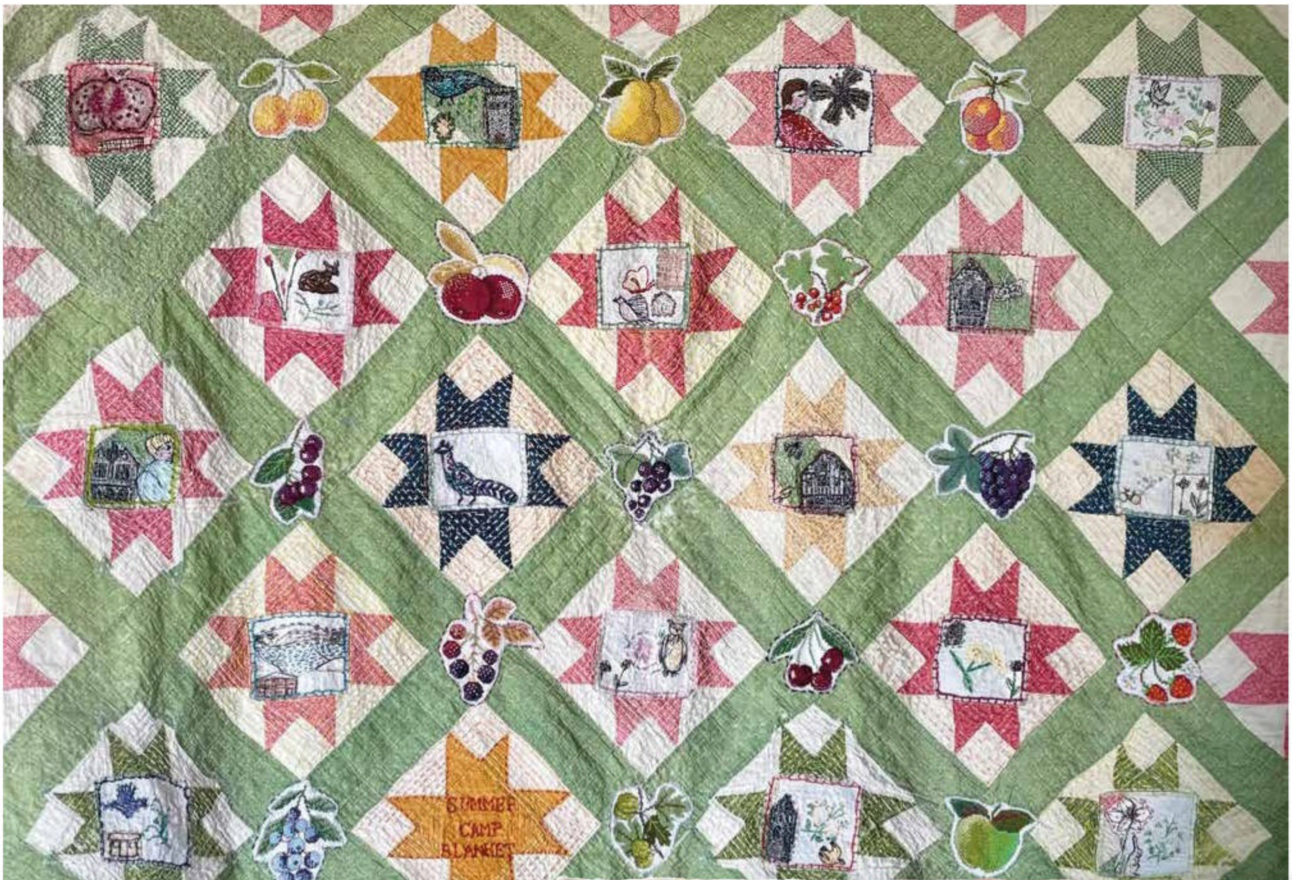

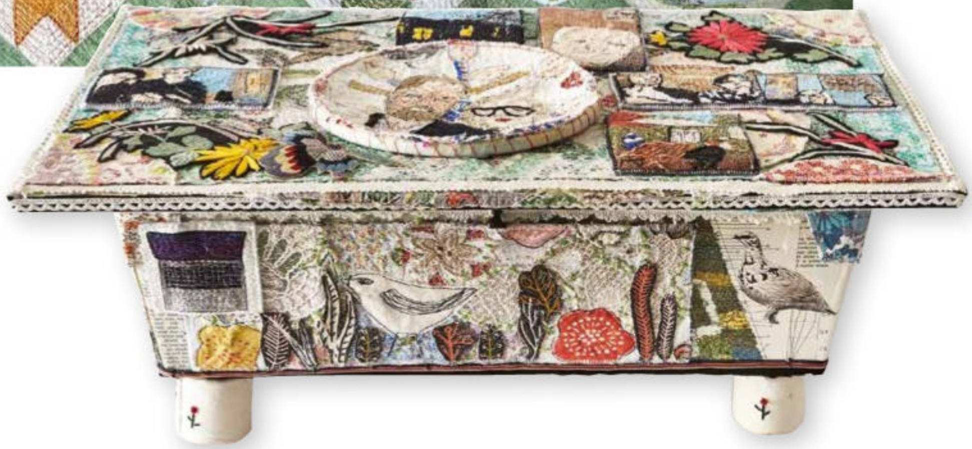

Previous pages, left: In *Amazon Glove Forest* the artist uses a pair of gloves gifted to her by a Canadian friend to represent the lungs of the world

Previous pages, right: Detail from *Amazon Bird Tree*, where the artist recycled coffee bean bags and hessian shopping bags to great effect

Above: For *Summer Camp Blanket*, Kelly recycled a quilt top, stitching on to it memories of past summer holidays, using kantha, cross-stitch and appliqué

Right: *Zoom Family Casket* was inspired by family conversations during lockdown, with the central vignette a hoop embroidery of herself and her husband, surrounded by vignettes of her family, all applied to a charity-shop-find sewing box

the quilt. These were then surrounded with kantha stitching, while cross-stitch fruits were also appliquéd at intervals. Finally, the piece was mounted on a vintage tablecloth. I think this is a good example of the advice I give to my students, to use pieces of textile that you are saving, as you will make something beautiful with them.

Sadly, we lost family and friends during the pandemic, and all of these pieces have an emotional connection to them, via both memories and actual materials. A Canadian friend gifted me her grandmother's collection of gloves and I used them for my first *Amazon Glove Forest* piece. The gloves represent trees, which are the lungs of the world, and also portray our hands reaching out to connect us. South American animals and birds are scattered through the piece and a mixture of hand and machine stitching combine the layers of work.

Amazon Bird Tree is the latest piece, completed during the recent elections in Brazil, where the very future of democracy for that country and safeguarding of the rainforest appeared to be in peril. I used a couple of coffee bean bags and shopping carrier bags with hessian backing to create simple and strong motifs. These were mounted on a silk background, from a charity shop, and embellished with further birds and plants, hand-coloured, embroidered by machine and finished with some hand-stitching. I mounted the entire piece on to a found tablecloth and left part of the border showing as a frame.

Although I cannot claim to be an 'eco-warrior', I am conscious of my carbon footprint and how the intentional use of materials impacts on the environment when making art. All of my work in the new exhibition is made from recycled and reused elements. I am setting up a work area inside the gallery so that visitors of all ages can contribute to a community collaboration on the theme of travel and memory. I am teaching two workshops at Hope and Elvis, near the gallery, on these themes, on 18 and 19 February.

Anne Kelly's Well Travelled is at the Harley Gallery, Welbeck Estate, Nottinghamshire from 24 January to 15 March.

Anne is the author of four books for Batsford. Her fifth, Textile Portraits, *will be published in 2023.*

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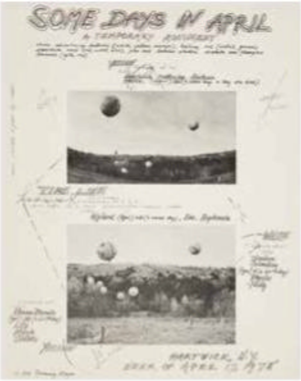
reading list

The letters of Rosemary and Bernadette Mayer, 1976-1980

NARCISSUS
HELEN
NARCISSUS



This fascinating book, a collection in letters of stories and images, artwork and photographs, tells the tale of two sisters, Rosemary and Bernadette Mayer; an artist and a poet. It is set in the febrile and heady days of the late 1970s art and literary worlds in New York and New England, where the sisters lived and worked. The book accompanies a survey exhibition of Rosemary's Ways of Attaching at Spike Island in Bristol, on until 15 January. The book gives a rare insight into the working and home lives of the sisters, their thoughts, concerns and the progress of their individual work projects.

There are sketched out poems and illustrations for installations, ideas for work in progress and work to come. Touchingly, there are also vignettes of everyday life and emotions shared. The sisters depended on each other for physical and financial reasons after the early death of their parents, and were very close.

Their correspondence reflects the concurrent women's movement in America and their mutual search for a place, funding, and exhibitions in the art and literary communities of the time. Rosemary's textile sculptures are ethereal and echo the work of Eva Hesse to a degree, also exploring temporality and history.

The exhibition at Spike Island in Bristol is the first show of Rosemary's work in the UK. I was particularly pleased to see her drawings, artist books and designs for making, giving a real insight into her thoughts and processes. Her balloon sculpture/events were notable at the time and she also describes in the book how she sourced and produced them. Her sister's poetry is documented throughout and there are drafts of it running through the book. I particularly liked seeing their postcards, which are touchingly simple but meaningful. This book is an intimate portrait of the sisters, their creativity and mutual support.
Anne Kelly

The Letters of
Rosemary and Bernadette Mayer
1976–1980

***The Letters of Rosemary and Bernadette Mayer, 1976-1980*. Edited by Gillian Sneed and Marie Warsh. Published by Lenbachhaus, Ludwig Forum, Spike Island and Swiss Institute 2022, £20.** SPIKEISLAND.ORG.UK/SHOP

Rosemary Mayer: Ways of Attaching is at Spike Island, Bristol, until 15 January.
SPIKEISLAND.ORG.UK

Celia Pym's thoughts on mending

Vivien Leigh's
Dress and Jacket

Fifty-six years old, mended 2020

This dress and jacket ensemble belonged to the British actress Vivien Leigh, one of the great stars of her day, celebrated for such films as *Gone With the Wind* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The garments lay forgotten in an attic for fifty-odd years before being rediscovered in 2018. But by then the dress and jacket had been devoured by moths.

A fascinating insight into the work of a pre-eminent craftsperson, *On Mending: Stories of damage and repair* was inspired by Celia Pym's experience of hearing intimate stories from people's lives, of loss and love as a result of mending the holes in their clothes. Not a 'how-to' book, this is rather an in-depth look into the damage that we do, as manifested by our outer layers, our clothes.

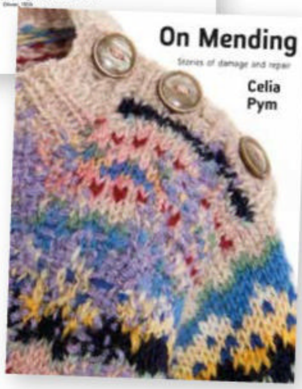
We describe the body as mending after illness or injury. You might hear a doctor or nurse describe a broken bone as 'mending well', while broken bones are often described as knitting back together as the break heals. Celia Pym, a trained nurse, is interested in exploring the varied evidence of damage, and how repair draws attention to the places where garments and cloth wear down and grow thin.

There are fascinating personal tales in her book, such as the story of Hollywood film-star Vivien Leigh's dress and jacket consigned to an attic for 50 years and then mended by Pym in 2020, or the tale of Annemor Sundbo's business recycling used clothing and the knitted garments she saved from going through her shredding machine because they were too precious. As a result, Sundbo was left with a one-tonne collection of knitwear, one item of which was mended by Pym in *The Norwegian Sweater* artwork.

Pym tells us that mending work builds on what is left behind. It's not replacing, or remaking, or cutting apart and putting back together, instead it is slow work that makes things better. It conjures an unhurried recovery or change. In textiles, the act of mending wear-and-tear, thinning cloth or accidental damage builds on what already exists, anchoring threads and yarn into the robust healthy fabric and filling in the holes or reinforcing the areas that are weak.

'Darning is small acts of care and paying close attention,' says Pym who lives in London and is an associate lecturer at the Royal College of Art. She has been exploring damage and repair in textiles since 2007, working with garments that belong to individuals as well as items stored in archives.

Her fascination becomes the reader's fascination. This is probably one of the most thought-provoking art books you will read this year.
Katie Williams



***On Mending: Stories of damage and repair*
by Celia Pym, Quickthorn Books, £19.99**

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first person

random acts of kindness

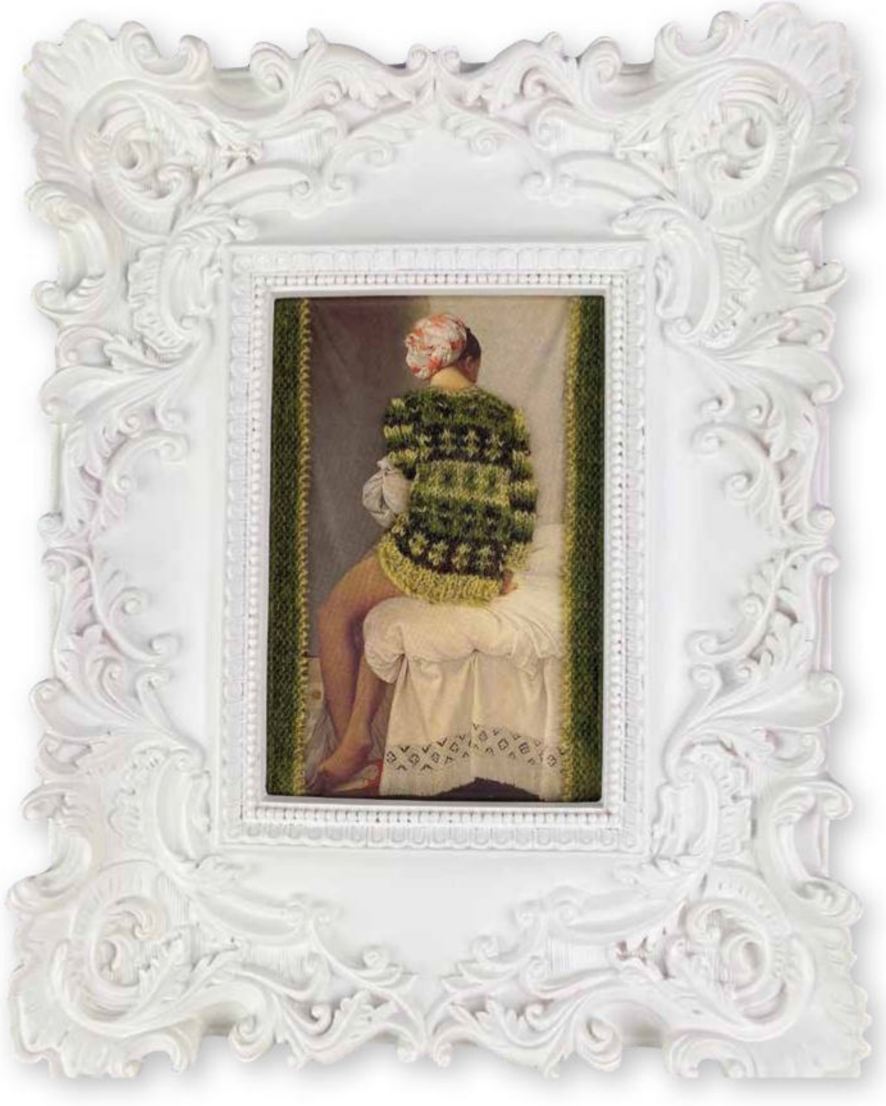
Sally Spinks didn't let her initial lack of higher education hold her back, and after a Master of Fine Arts was ready to take the textile art world by storm, both with her Random Acts of Kindness and a passion for the ubiquitous tattoo

■ INTERESTED IN THE changing nature of class and social equity, I work predominantly with the 'cosiness' of textiles. The familiar comfort of fabric draws the viewer in, but I contrast it with uncomfortable realities and ask challenging questions. Using techniques such as tufting, needle punch and knitting, I often employ codes, statistics, graffiti and repetition to explore how information and voices can be suppressed or amplified.

As with many textile artists, the roots of my practice date back to childhood. We didn't have much money so to keep costs down my mum used to knit jumpers for her three children. She taught me how to knit at the age of nine, and from there I was able to develop my own style. While we weren't poor, things weren't easy, so I started work at 18 and didn't go to university.

Throughout my business career in big creative organisations, I often felt like an outsider because of my lack of higher education, but I managed to navigate the system to achieve, despite my insecurities. Completing a work-related master's gave me a big boost in confidence and I decided what I really wanted to do was to get back to 'making'. I wanted to escape the confines of traditional patterns and materials and move into exploration.

Alongside my day job, I studied a textile course with the Open College of the Arts which enabled me to build a portfolio and helped me gain a place on a full-time Master of Fine Art course at Goldsmiths.

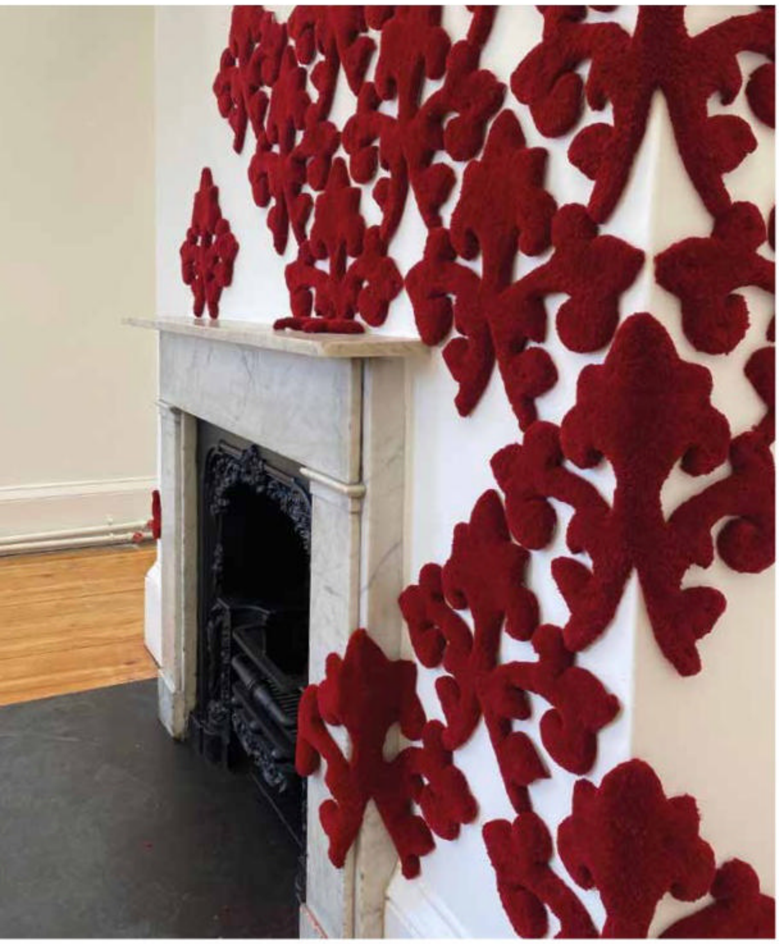


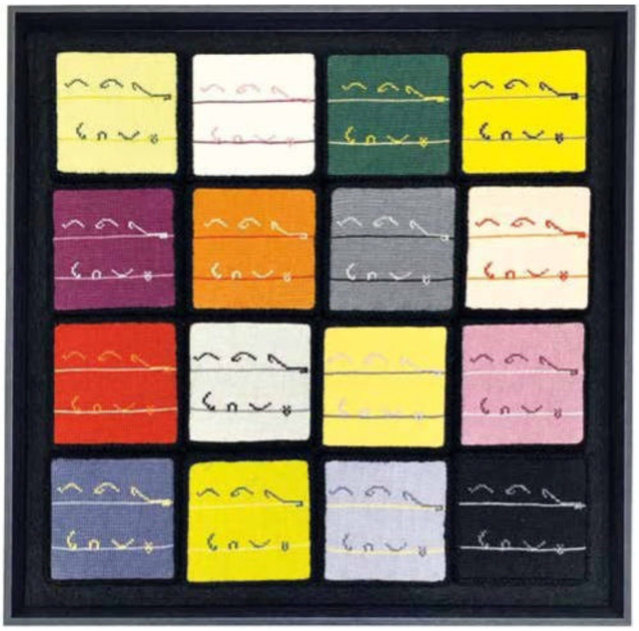
After a few weeks of utter bewilderment at Goldsmiths, things suddenly clicked. I started making intuitively and realised my ideas could prosper through the art I created. Much of my early work revolved around motherhood. It wasn't a conscious decision at the time of making, but looking back I realise it was an expression of a complex relationship with my mother and disappointment at not being able to have my own children.

While researching the changing nature of class and identity, I became fascinated by tattoos, especially the old fashioned 'mum' tattoo. Growing up I'd seen tattoos as mostly the province of the lower classes, sometimes even criminal classes, but now they had become classless and ubiquitous. The original intention of tattoos in cultures such as Polynesia was to represent a bond with the community and connection with the ancestors. I developed a theory that the social change toward tattoos in the UK had come about because they were a 'portable expression of identity', helping us gain stability in unstable times. Around the same time, I discovered tufting and a serendipitous lightbulb flashed on. Carpets were also portable and contained coded expressions of identity in many Middle Eastern cultures. I was struck by how the tufting gun was similar to the tattoo needle piercing the skin.

After my MFA, I returned to work but continued making, although on a smaller scale. One long-term project that has manifested as a continuing series is the Random Acts of Kindness artworks. I had intended the work to express a sentiment from my childhood: 'Put your jumper on, otherwise you'll catch your death of cold'. Applying knitted woolly jumpers to naked models in Old Master paintings was my 'random act of kindness'.

One of the series made it into the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 2020 and it was interesting that there appeared to be a class divide in how people viewed the works. People from similar backgrounds to mine saw the same caring intention, but those from higher classes thought I was making a comment on the 'male gaze', a topic much debated in the art world. The intention of art is for people to develop their own interpretation of the work, but those experiences were illuminating.





Continuing to create work around the themes of class, identity and social equity, I am now part of two prestigious textile communities, The 62 Group and Prism Textiles, where I can push my practice through regular exhibiting opportunities. I've explored topics such as mental health, social stratification and wage disparity, and continue to develop narratives using codes, graffiti, shorthand, morse code and braille. I've also started working on a larger scale again. For an installation for the British Textile Biennial in 2021, I took the concept of flock and enhanced its sumptuousness and the reuse-recycle ethic. I also worked on a braille, morse code and shorthand repetition of a cry for help: 'I am more broken than you know'.

It took me a few years to find my groove but one thing I'm sure of is that I follow ideas and concepts first, then alight on techniques and materials. I'm still passionate about moving the debate in textile art away from the domestic to parity with other forms of art. Something that stuck with me from my time at Goldsmiths was when people would ask me why I used knitting in my art. My standard response was: 'You wouldn't ask a painter why they use paint.'

Sally Spinks

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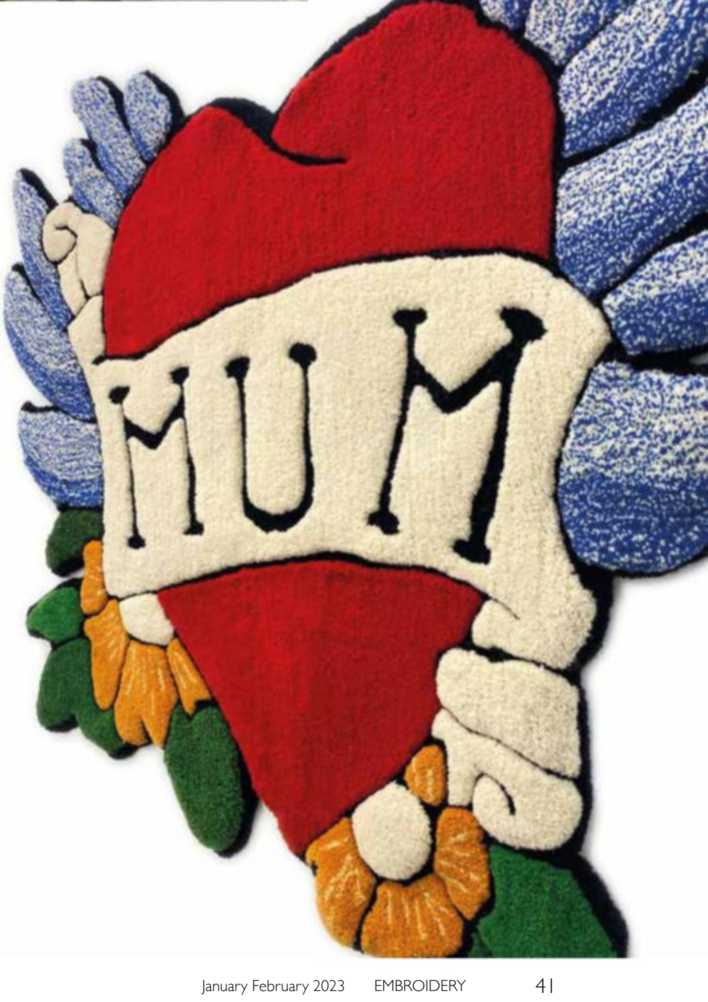
Opposite page: *Random Acts of Kindness* – a jumper to keep the model cosy and warm, knitted on tiny 0.9mm needles with fine yarn on a postcard-sized Old Master

This page, clockwise from top left: *Birds of a Feather,* a sumptuous tufted flock installation wrapped around a fireplace for the British Textile Biennial 2021;

Detail of the repeated cry for help, 'I am more broken than you know' to illustrate how difficult we find asking for help. Part of the *I'm Good Thanks* installation;

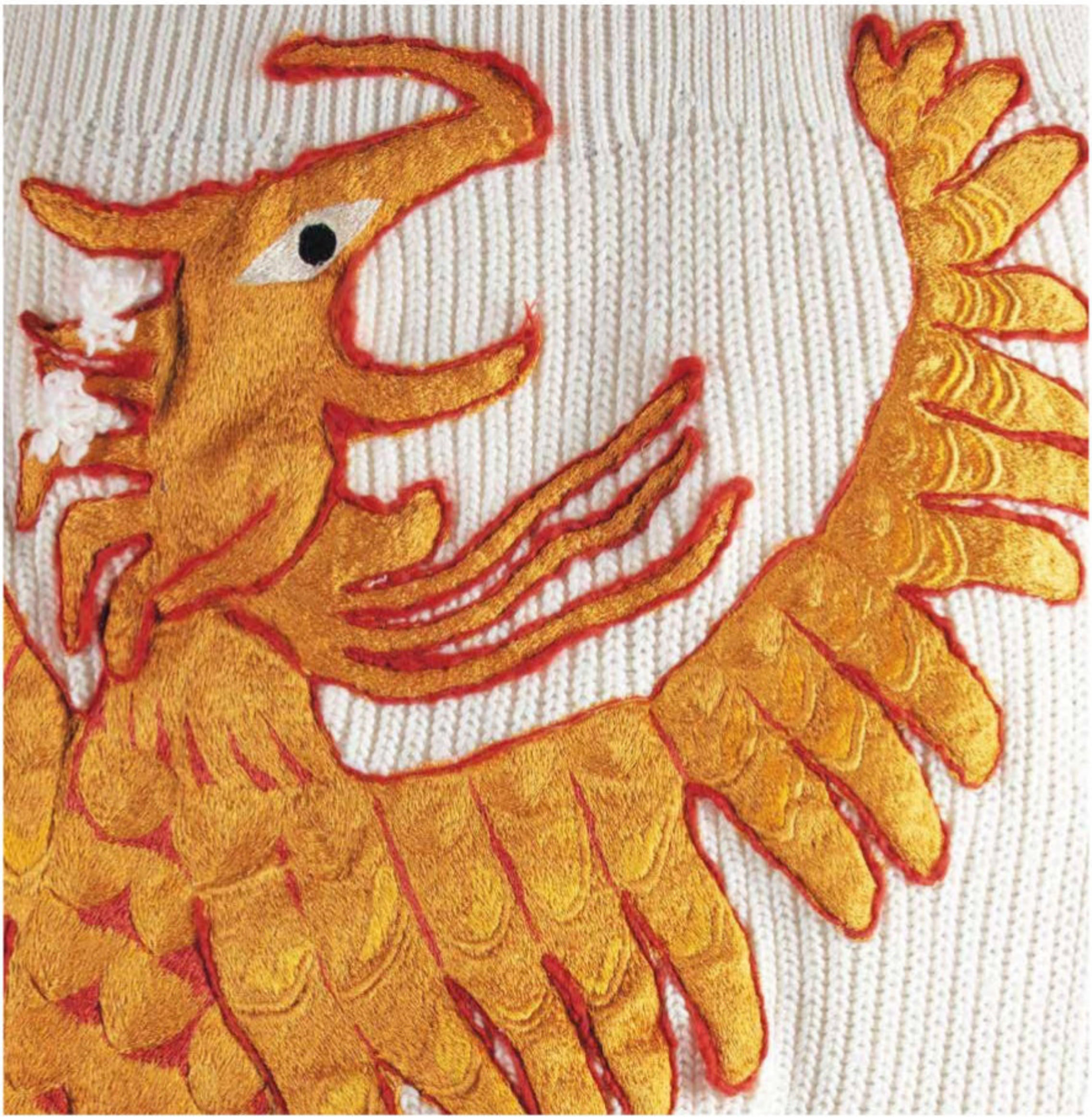
The artist at work, carving details into carpet;

Mum, one of the now ubiquitous tattoos Sally highlights, tattoos more recently having come out of the back streets and into the light, seemingly adopted by all classes, 1.65m x 1.55m



in
high
spirits

Woo Jin Joo, an award-winning textile artist who has only recently left the Royal College of Art, is exhibiting work that revolves around a particular kind of animism, that of the Korean 'Dokkaebi' – or goblin



Creature Comforts is at JGM Gallery in London until 21 January, with work by 14 contemporary textile artists who subvert the expectations of the medium while crafting exquisite work. Here, Karolina Dworska throws the spotlight on a recent Royal College of Art graduate, the award-winning Woo Jin Joo.

KD: *What initially attracted you to textiles as a medium?*

WJJ: My interest in art and making began when I was at school. I remember spending a lot of time working in my sketchbook, building ideas around works I wanted to make. Finding the time to research and build ideas is still extremely important in my practice, as well as constant reflection throughout the process.

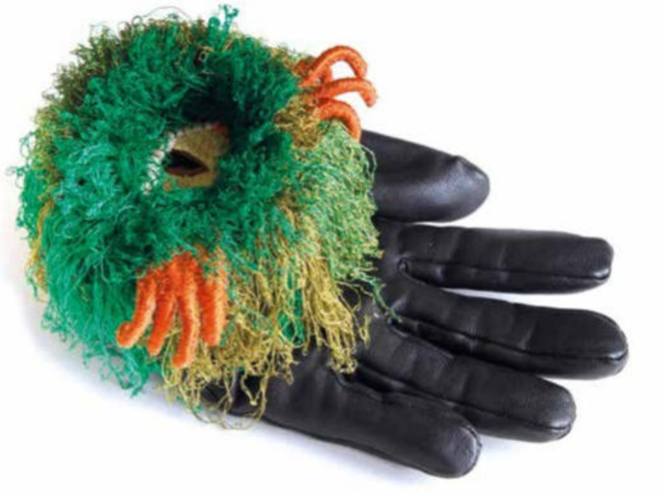
After school, I decided to pursue textile art at Central Saint Martins. On their foundation course I discovered my fascination with textiles as a medium and opted to make it the focus of my studies. Initially, I thought my path was in designing for fashion and interiors, but by the end of my studies, I realised my fascination was actually rooted in textiles' materiality and exploring the fluid boundary that is encompassed by 'textiles'. Continuing my education at the Royal College of Art, I began to expand and experiment with what textiles meant to me. Now I see myself as a mixed-media artist specialising in soft sculpture and textiles, allowing flexibility in my practice yet focusing on a medium that continues to inspire and excite me.

KD: *What is your favourite textile technique?*

WJJ: My favourite technique is embroidery, and especially freehand machine embroidery on dissolvable backing, resulting in unique free-standing artwork.

KD: *You talk a lot about 're-mystifying' and 're-enchanting' the way in which we engage with everyday materials and objects. Could you tell me a bit more about how this materialises in your practice?*

WJJ: The focus of my practice is on exploring our relationship with the materials and objects in our lives, especially in today's consumer culture, where our engagement with them has become ever-more temporary and fleeting. Through my work, I want to explore alternative ways we can see and engage with these objects and materials, and what these diverse views might lend to rebuilding a relationship that is more lasting, caring and enchanting.



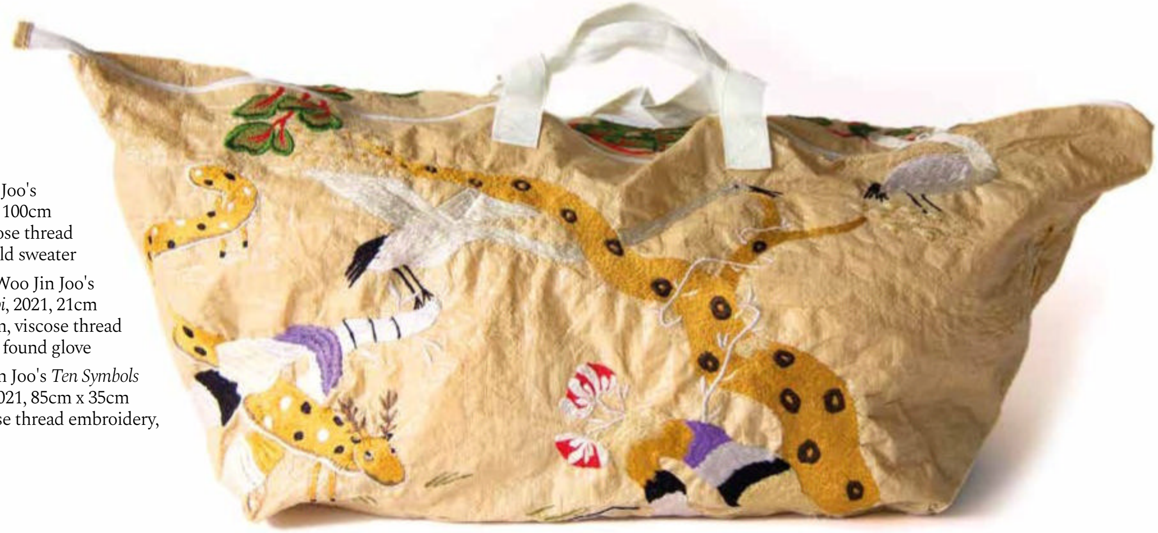
'IT IS BELIEVED DOKKAEBIS ARE FORMED BY THE SPIRITUAL POSSESSION OF AN INANIMATE OBJECT'

KD: *As if by magic, you transform found objects like lost gloves and old socks into mythical creatures. I'd love to know more about your process and the mythology of the 'Dokkaebi' or Korean 'goblin'.*

WJJ: The East Asian culture I have grown up in is entangled with and influences my practice. The culture and beliefs I was raised in exist on a subconscious level and inform my perspectives and identity. Simultaneously, the culture, art, and mythology of East Asia also provide direct inspiration or visual cues. The 'Dokkaebi' series is a good example of this, where the well-known mythology of East Asia promulgates the belief in objects forming their own spirits. This has inspired me to create new hybrid mystical creatures out of found or old objects.

Can you tell us more about the Dokkaebi?

Dokkaebis are Korean mythological creatures, a kind of Korean 'goblin'. It is believed they are formed by the spiritual possession of an inanimate object, such as old discarded household tools, brooms and pots. It is thought they have abilities to interact with humans, at times playing tricks on them and at times helping them. I bring this idea of inanimate objects possessing spirit into



Left: Woo Jin Joo's *Re-New*, 2021, 100cm x 125cm, viscose thread embroidery, old sweater

Above right: Woo Jin Joo's *Glove Dokkaebi*, 2021, 21cm x 11cm x 13cm, viscose thread embroidery, a found glove

Right: Woo Jin Joo's *Ten Symbols of Longevity*, 2021, 85cm x 35cm x 30cm, viscose thread embroidery, an IKEA bag my practice in order to question the way we perceive and build relationships with inanimate objects in today's society.

KD: *What do you think about the association between textiles and femininity and domesticity?*
WJJ: What drew me to textiles is the fluidity of boundaries and the flexibility of the medium to be and become anything. Textiles, whether in art, design, production or as a craft, still have an association with the feminine and domestic, but I think textile art will soon engulf and bend the boundaries and association it has, because there are so many makers 'unbounded' and 'unbothered' by these associations, and this flow of change is irreversible once the boundaries begin to fade.

KD: *Your embroidered work is incredibly intricate and well constructed, and dazzlingly strange and beautiful. Are time consuming craft processes important to you as an artist?*
WJJ: Anni Albers wrote in *Materials as Metaphor*: "Ideas flow from it to us and though we feel to be the creator we are involved in a dialogue with our medium. The more subtly we are tuned to our medium, the more inventive our actions will become. Not listening to it ends in failure." I very much agree with this idea of the maker in dialogue with the medium, and it is often that the making of one work naturally leads to another idea through engagement with the material and allowing space for accidents or new associations to happen.

KD: *Do you have a favourite piece of work?*
WJJ: I have a couple of works that I like, but one work that I am very attached to is **虎死留皮，人死留名。**(*When a tiger dies, it leaves behind its skin, when a man dies he leaves behind his name*). It is one of the early works that has sparked and propelled ideas.

Win Jin Joo won the Fine Art Textile Prize, hosted by the Festival of Quilts; and is shortlisted for the East London Art Prize and the Hari Art Prize. She has been awarded the Arts Council's developing your creative practice grant and the Elephant Trust Award. www.woojinstudio.com Instagram: @woojinstudio

Embroidery is just one of the techniques shown in the exhibition. Weaving, rug-tufting, quilting and hand and machine knitting, as well as soft sculptures, also feature in the show, creating a rich landscape of colourful strange creations, constructed by immensely skilled artists.

The idea for the show initially sprung out of a long chat about Amish quilts between myself and Jennifer, director of JGM Gallery. We both felt the allure of tessellating colourful designs and on a more intrinsic level the amount of intricate, tender care that is required in their construction, really compelling. The core theme of the show eventually developed into blurring the lines between comfort and discomfort; of embracing textile art for its cosy connotations, and enjoying the way it can connect us to each other and our heritage, while pushing its boundaries and subverting all these preconceptions.

Scratchy, silky, soft, itchy, light. The many textures and techniques employed throughout Creature Comforts are sure to draw in the viewer and make them marvel at the complex, careful construction of each piece, and the real passion for each craft. There are immensely comforting quilts, some earth-toned and hay-stuffed hang from the ceiling, while others are geometric and sharp, oscillating with dazzling gradients. Dotted around are handwoven stools, handspun and hand-dyed, imbued with such love and vigour for traditional craft.

Strange, enchanted embroidered creatures inhabit the space, accompanied by plushie dog-like beasts clambering out of a pillar. Otherworldly scenes adorn the walls, from surreal, ambiguous tufted landscapes, to tapestries of ancient Roman gardens, infested by human-plant hybrids, and abstracted microscopic forms pixelated into cross-stitch.

The woven and knitted tapestries bring about an atmosphere of surreal conflict. Inner struggles, mysterious threats and impending environmental doom are made immediately accessible to the viewer through the soft appeal of the medium.

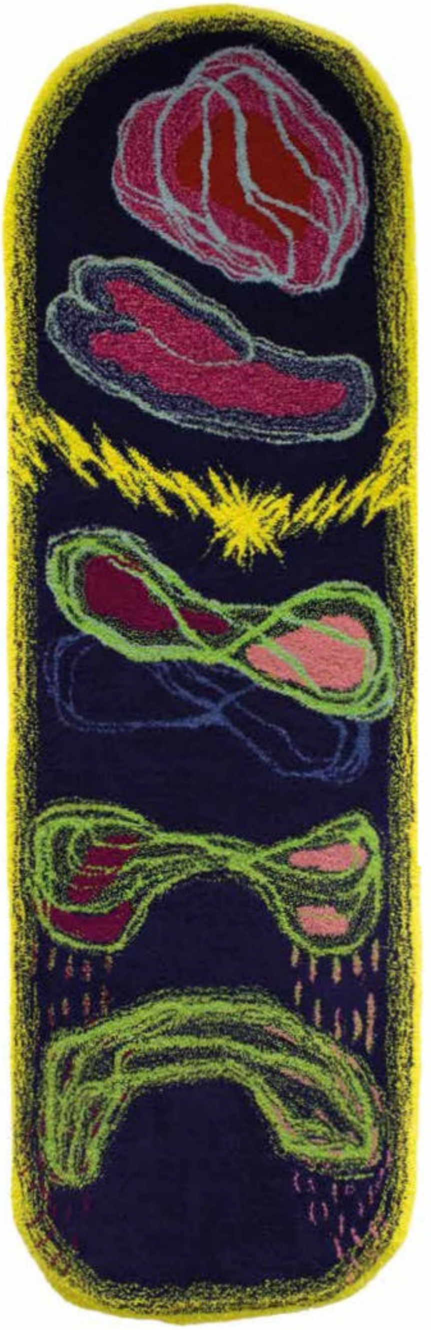
Every stitch, every knitted and woven row, every dot of tufted pile has been so skilfully crafted to create each intriguing piece. The trace of the maker's tender touch can be seen in every work.

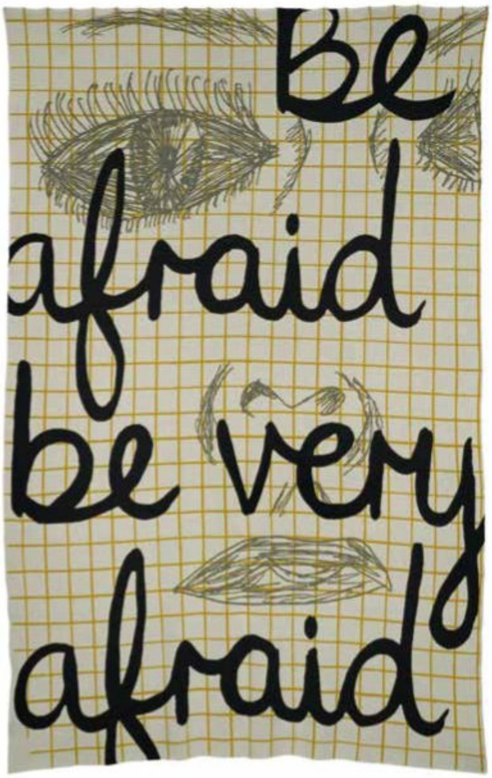
The exhibition traverses the endless playful possibilities of the medium and the ways in which artists embrace and subvert these expectations. The strangeness, energy and intensity at the core of this exhibition reminds us of the importance of playing and having fun with the traditional assumptions of domesticity associated with textile crafts, and the power of its subversion.

Karolina Dworska

Creature Comforts also includes works by Alice Kettle, Andia Newton, Elina Flyrin, Freddie Robins, Hamish Halley, Heidi Pearce, Karolina Dworska, Lara Salous, Liza Dickson, Lola Pedersen, Martin Maloney, Molly Kent, Sebastian Sochan and Woo Jin Joo. Until 21 January at JGM Gallery, London. www.jgmgallery.com

'THE CORE THEME OF THE SHOW EVENTUALLY DEVELOPED INTO BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN COMFORT AND DISCOMFORT'





Opposite page: Heidi Pearce's *Dante (Nervous)*, 2022, 170cm x 200cm, faux fur, polyfibre stuffing, metal wall-mount

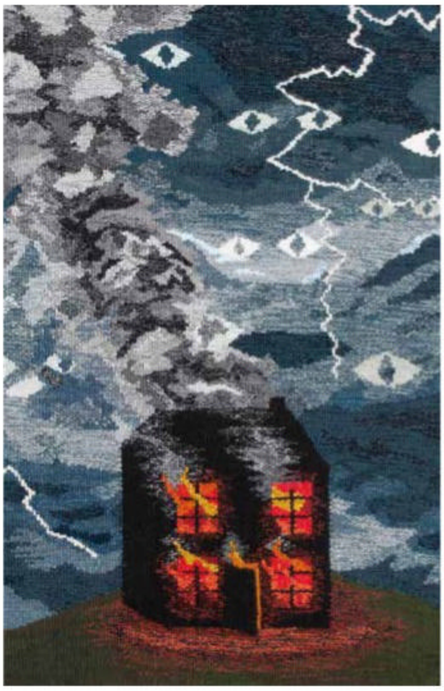
This page, above far left: Elina Flyrin whip-stitching the back of her tufting; and left, Flyrin's *That which I hope for* (2022), 183cm x 60cm, machine-tufted Axminster yarn and canvas

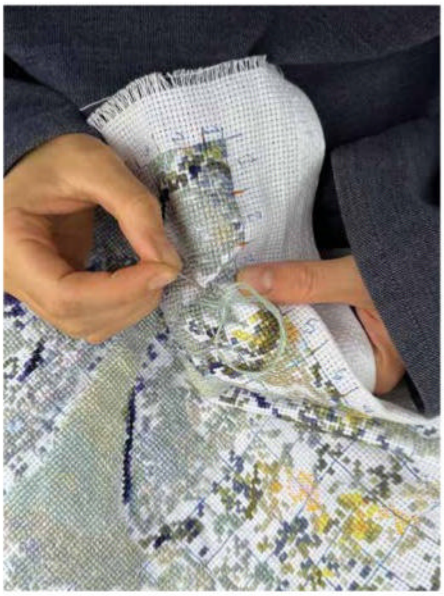
Above right: Freddie Robins' *Be Afraid*, 2019, 300cm x 190 cm x 6.5cm, machine-knitted wool tapestry

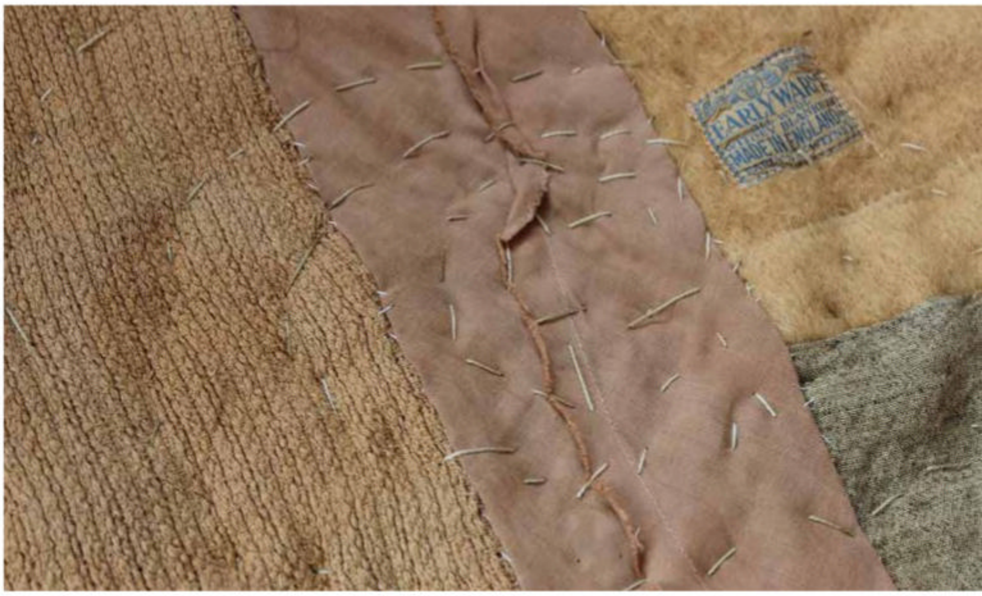
Far left: Molly Kent's sinister *They Come Alive After Dark*, 61cm x 47 cm, wool, acrylic and cotton

Below left: Lola Rose Pedersen working on her cross-stitch piece

Below: Hamish Halley's *Hay Quilt*, 2022, 103cm x 107cm, naturally-dyed cotton, linen, wool, silk and Scots Timothy hay







THE PATCHWORK OF THE CENTURY

A trip to London's Southbank Centre proved serendipitous for June Hill when she came across a huge patchwork. With her interest piqued, she turned detective to discover the story of the makers, and one in particular, behind the artwork

LAST SUMMER I NIPPED into London's Southbank Centre to get directions. Turning back towards the exit, I was faced by an internal wall on which hung a huge patchwork. Ten squares high and ten wide, with each patch a foot square (30cm), the piece filled the width of the wall and extended upwards to the next floor. Hard to miss an object of such size, but it was not something I remembered seeing before. My original destination was forgotten. The focus now was the *Patchwork of the Century*.

One hundred squares. One for every year from 1851 to 1950. Each patch hand-sewn with an image of an event, achievement or figure associated with a specific year. Some squares were embroidered, most a combination of stitch and appliqué. Images varied in style but shared a graphic quality in their simple, identifiable shapes: a Remington typewriter (1873), a writing slate (1891), a belisha crossing (1933), an ARP warden (1941).

'Some names are well known in textile history. Lilian Dring is one whom we need to know more'

The patchwork had the feel of a cloth book, its pages laid out vertically, with the 1851 Great Exhibition and the 1951 Festival of Britain acting as bookends. Themes rippled across the decades: war, innovation, entertainment, social reform. Time laid out in this manner seemed to somehow bring it within grasp.

Free education, Votes for Women, state pensions, the founding of the NHS, and the BBC. Each was noted as a milestone. A century suddenly seemed no time at all.

I left wanting to know more about the work and its maker. The display label and venue website provided basic information, including a key for each square. It was a start. Tracing the story of an object can itself be a patchwork process, as snippets of information from various sources are first gathered, and then pieced together. The artefact, collection information, contemporary reports, publications: fragment by fragment, a picture was formed.

The Patchwork of the Century was designed by Lilian Dring (1908-1998) for Women of the Century, a Festival of Britain exhibition at York House, Twickenham, that she also curated. Opened by Dame Sybil Thorndike, the exhibition traced the history of women's political and social advancement through pictures, photographs, models, textiles and dress.

The patchwork was Dring's initiative, a communal project in which she worked with 80 members of women's groups in Twickenham, Teddington and Hampton over a period of two months. Each square was worked separately using recycled fabric, then assembled together by Dring. The variety of hands involved is apparent in the stitching and several individual designs. Dring's own hand is equally evident. She made four squares. The first and last are known to be hers, while the 1926 General Strike block has a resonance with *Parable I* (1941), an earlier work acquired by the Needlework Development Scheme that is now held by National Museums Scotland.

It is intriguing that not all the events depicted are linked purely with women. Perhaps we are rather being offered a women's perspective on the century.

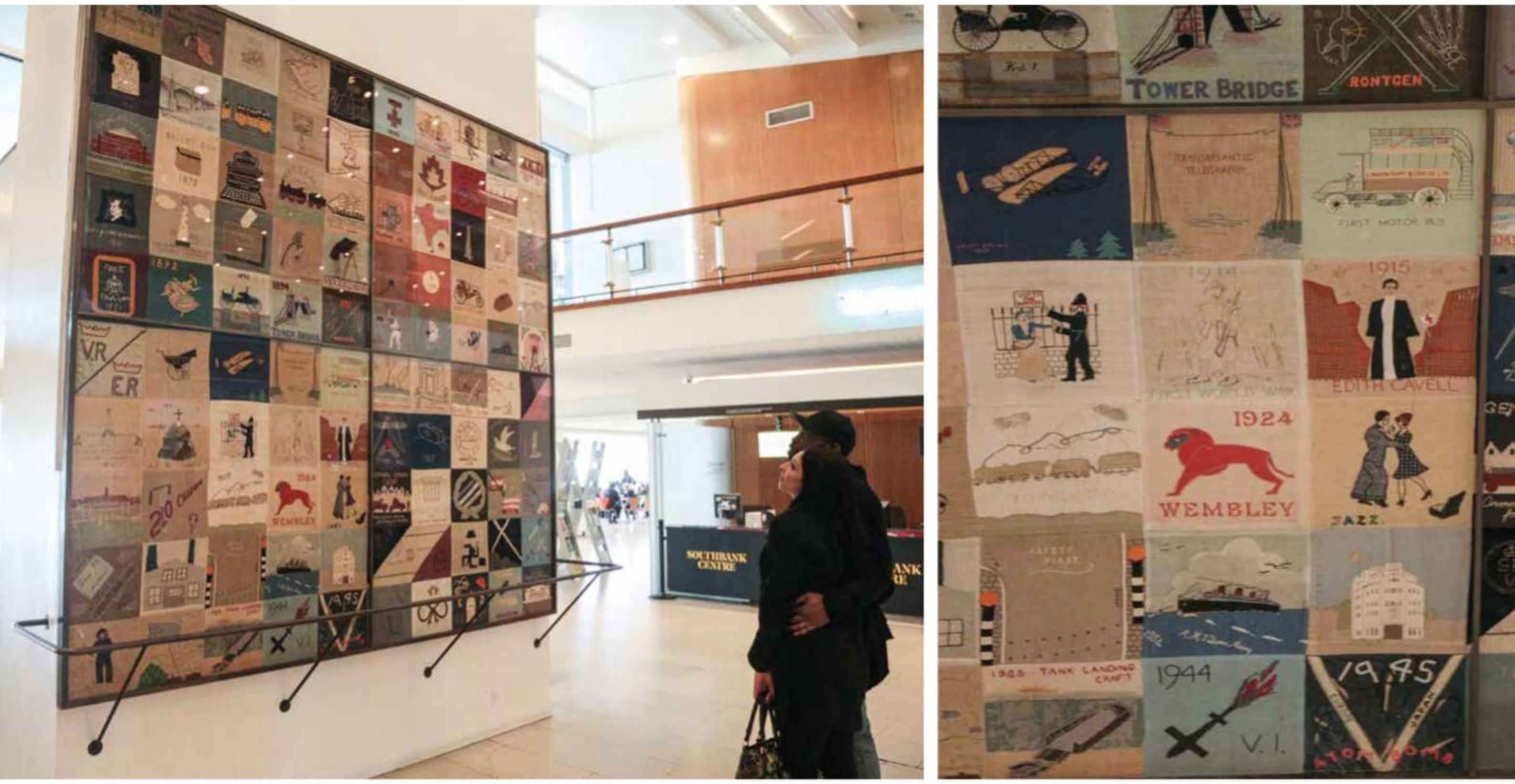
Whatever the thinking, the patchwork hit the mark. The exhibition lasted only five days but such was the response that a festival organiser arranged for the patchwork to be transferred to the main Southbank site where it remained on view until the end of the event. Returned to Dring's safekeeping, the patchwork was exhibited periodically, including at the V&A's 1976 Tonic for the Nation, before returning permanently to the Southbank's Royal Festival Hall in 1984, where it forms part of the Festival of Britain archive.

Some names are well known in textile history. Dring is one whom we need to know more. A publication by Joan Edwards (another overlooked name) proved invaluable. *Textile Graphics* (1988) was written when Dring was 80 years old. With a foreword by Constance Howard (a long-term friend and associate), the publication is an informative introduction to Dring, and particularly helpful in recording the maker's words alongside those of her peers. There is no chance now to corroborate with Dring herself, but there is a consistency between the sources and the work that gives confidence to its accuracy.

First, the graphic style. A gifted artist from childhood, Dring won an exhibition to the Royal College of Art's Design School aged 18. (Interesting side note: her examination coincided with the General Strike. Did this experience feed into the visual strength of her patchwork block? "Lilian is not a person to ignore what she feels are attitudes or occurrences about which protests should be made," wrote Constance Howard.)

At the RCA, Dring was one of the first four students to study poster design as a diploma subject. The training was hugely influential. She always considered herself a graphic designer. Her poster designs for London Transport, the Youth Hostel Association and the post-war European Recovery Programme drew attention, but the Depression limited career opportunities.

In 1931 she began to work with textiles, first making rag dolls, then furnishings and appliqué pictures. Her tools were simple, her materials humble, her stitches



Above: Our writer June Hill only nipped into the Southbank Centre to ask for directions when suddenly she noticed a large patchwork on the wall that she had never seen before. Fascinated by this artwork that was completed in the 1950s, June turned detective to see if she could find out who the women were behind the *Patchwork of the Century*

PHOTOS BY INDIA ROPER-EVANS

modest. Her eye ever that of the graphic designer she had trained to be. "Always have a reason for everything," Dring wrote. She was not one for waste. She worked from her collection of fabric scraps and sewed with her mother's 1912 Frister-Rossman machine. Part necessity, part conviction, Dring continued to use recycled material throughout her career. Thriftcraft was the name she gave this approach, sharing her ideas with teachers in a series of articles on craft lessons during the Make Do and Mend years. A teacher herself, Dring encouraged combining needlework with other lessons such as geography. It is something she did in her own work, as seen in the cross-sectional landscapes of *Parable I* and *Parable II* (1975). These are door-sized companion pieces that speak to contemporary issues: war, the environment. They could be posters in textile, such is the clarity of their messaging. Dring was renowned for her draughtsmanship and the simplicity of her designs. Her imagery is direct. Her materials carefully chosen and imaginatively used. Note the latter's aluminium ring-pull hangings, the press-stud wheels, the use of scrap. Parable ll took three years to complete, and probably a lifetime to make. It is a challenge - and a warning - that is as relevant now as when it was made.

June Hill

Below left, *Parable I*, and below right, *Parable II*, are door-sized cross-sectional landscapes which you could mistake for textile posters as the imagery is so clear. Both were purchased by the Needlework Development Scheme, now held by National Museums Scotland

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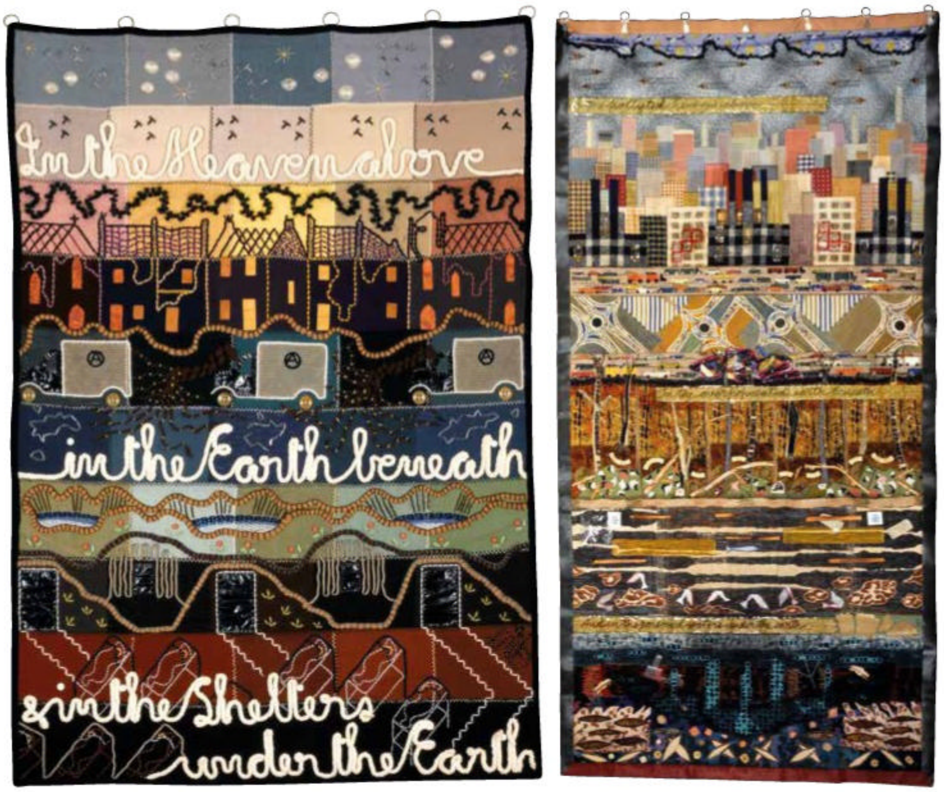
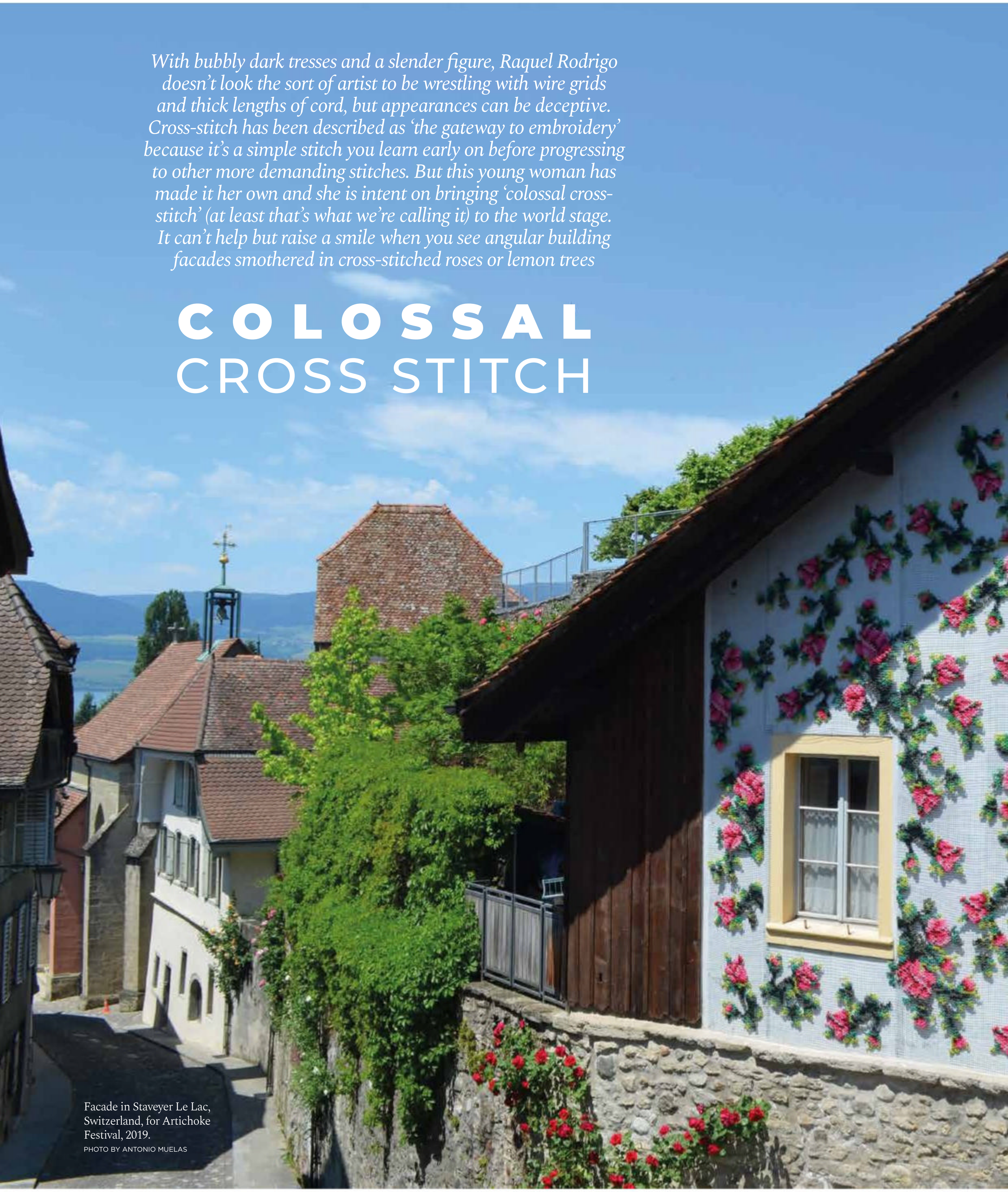
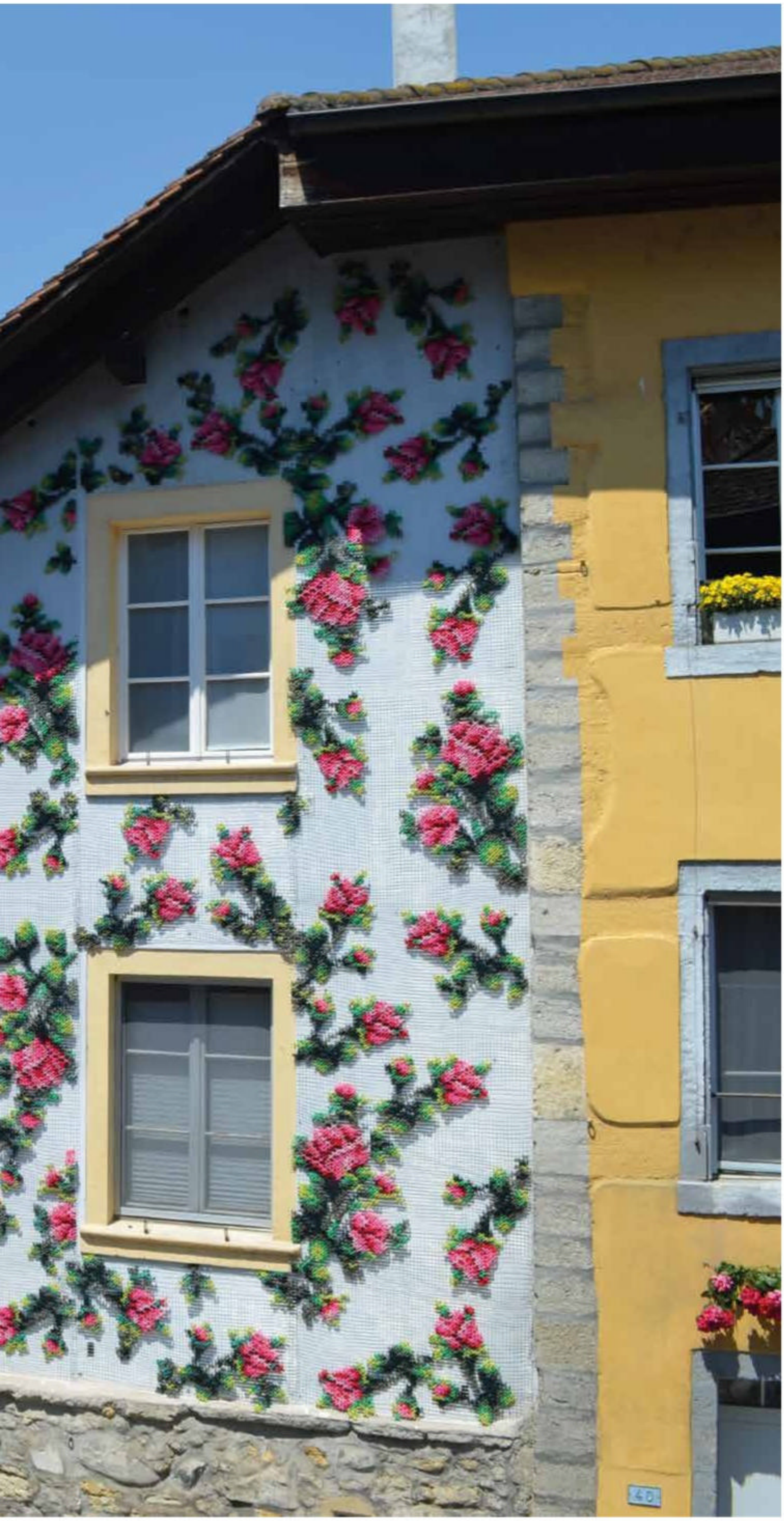


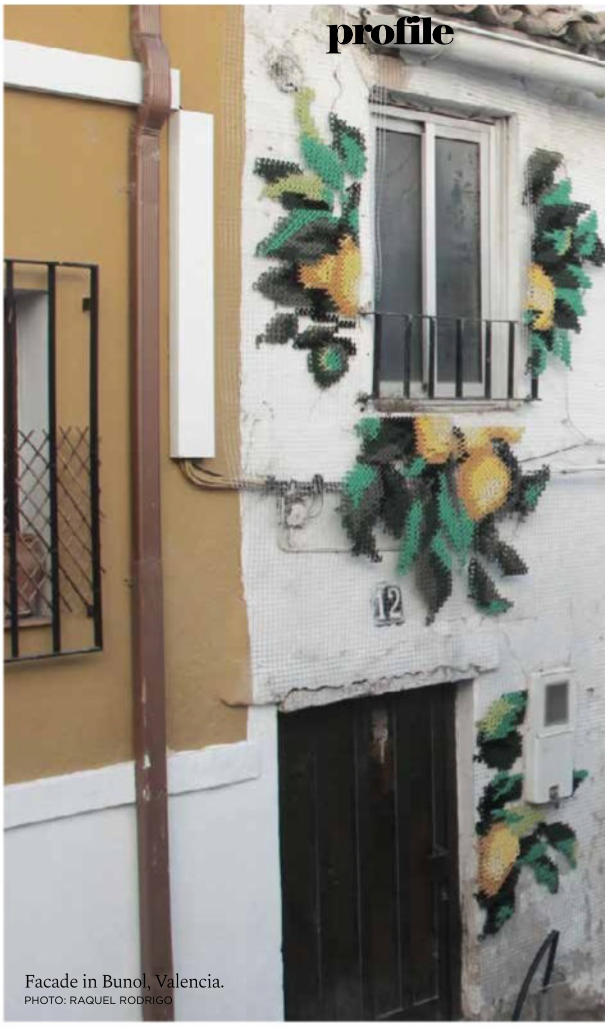
With bubbly dark tresses and a slender figure, Raquel Rodrigo doesn't look the sort of artist to be wrestling with wire grids and thick lengths of cord, but appearances can be deceptive. Cross-stitch has been described as 'the gateway to embroidery' because it's a simple stitch you learn early on before progressing to other more demanding stitches. But this young woman has made it her own and she is intent on bringing 'colossal cross-stitch' (at least that's what we're calling it) to the world stage. It can't help but raise a smile when you see angular building facades smothered in cross-stitched roses or lemon trees

COLOSSAL CROSS STITCH



Facade in Staveyer Le Lac, Switzerland, for Artichoke Festival, 2019.
PHOTO BY ANTONIO MUELAS





Facade in Bunol, Valencia.
PHOTO: RAQUEL RODRIGO

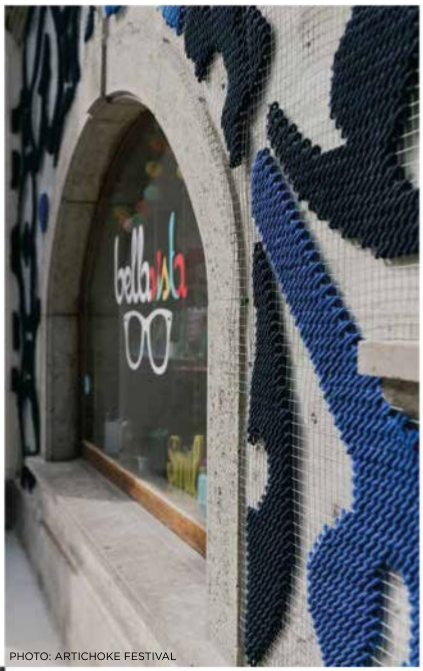
What are your childhood memories of sewing?
My paternal grandmother was a dressmaker so I was surrounded by sewing from an early age, and I played at making clothes for my dolls. My mother taught me to embroider cross-stitch on fabric when I was eight years-old and I completed several embroideries.

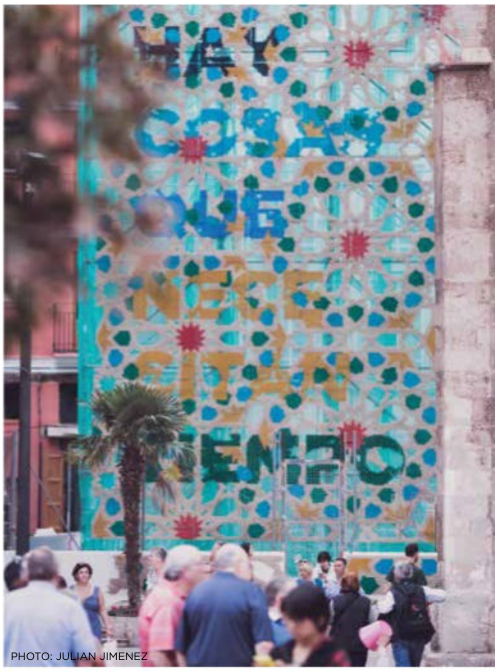
Have you studied embroidery?
No, I studied fine arts, specialising in interior design and window dressing, which is how the idea of embroidering building facades came up – with a window dressing project for a sewing store in Madrid in 2011. The concept was to embroider the façade of the store as an example of what was going on inside.

How did you come up with the technical aspects of 'giant cross-stitch'?
It was difficult because I needed to find the perfect materials to create an embroidery with a 'transparent' backing so it would look as though the facade was directly embroidered. I eventually went to a hardware store and sourced wire grids.

Can you describe your process?
I receive a photo of the space to be designed and its measurements and then make digital photomontages of my ideas. Next, I draw up patterns for the design and then I cut the panels.

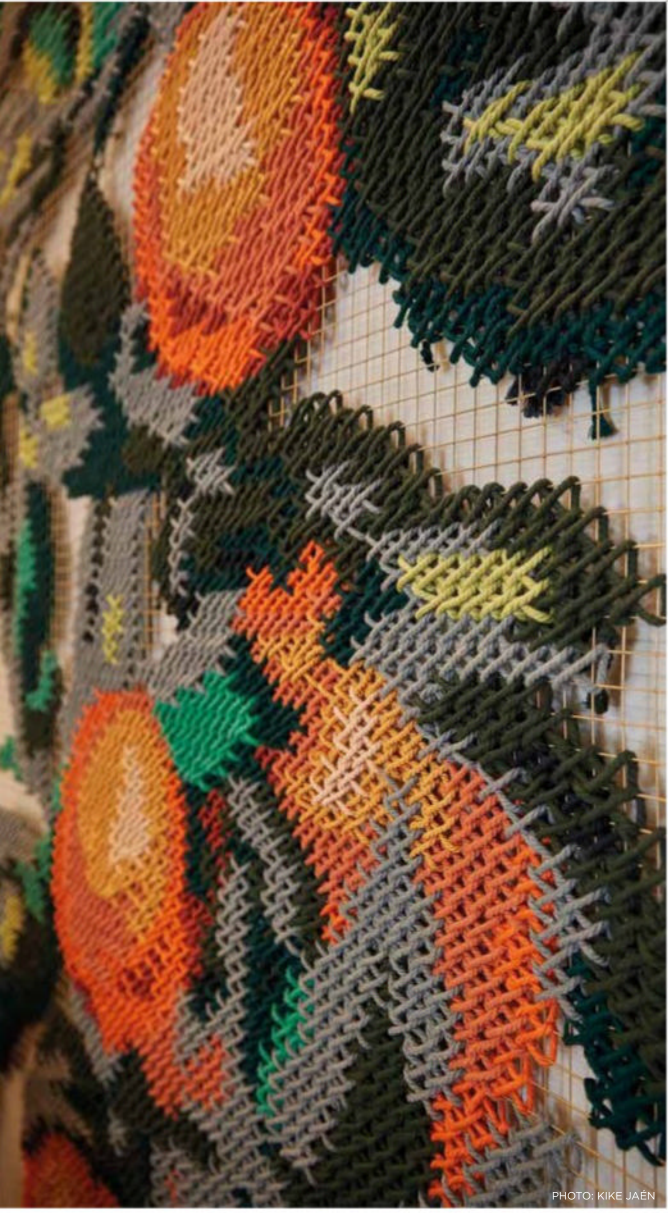
PHOTO: JULIAN JIMENEZ





Above, from left: Raquel Rodrigo in her workshop; Facade in Switzerland for the Artichoke Festival, 2022; Intervention at Valencia cathedral for Cervecas Alhambra, 2016.

Below: Interior design at the Vaqueta, Valencia.



I cross-stitch using multi-coloured cord. The pieces are then rolled up for transport, so when I get to the installation site they can be unfurled and affixed to the building.

What do you use as thread?
I use different types of cord depending on the project. We usually use colored cotton cords that come in different colors. But we have also used rayon, natural fibres, velvet or even recycled plastic yarns. In one project I wanted to use fluorescent colours to play with the lights in the art installation, so I had to dye the cotton cords myself.

How do you cross-stitch on this scale?
Because the pieces are so large, it is impossible for one person to work the cross stitch, so we have to work between two people, one in front, the other behind, to pass the threads back and forth. We work on a project basis and depending on the project size, we call on extra staff.

Do you think you were the first to come up with 'giant cross-stitch'?
Yes, or at least I wasn't inspired by anyone.

How did you become involved in installing giant cross stitch in Valencia in 2017, a project which captured the attention of the press?
I started participating in urban art festivals all over Spain and abroad and it led to the project in Valencia. I was born there and it's where I live now.

How do people react when they see your work?
People fall in love with my work when they see it. They often thank me for making their day and for reminding them of their childhood, their home. What people tend to like the most are my flowers, with which I also created my brand, my roses.

Which is your favourite out of all of your installations?
It's a difficult question, but I think I'll go with the facade of lemons in Buñol, Valencia, in 2017. For me it's very special because it's a small house and it's covered entirely by the design. I also feel that the composition is very well adapted to the house and its doors and windows.

What is next for you?
I never imagined that I could fulfil my dream to create a brand that allows me to work and travel all over the world. I am currently waiting for responses from several architects for hotel and restaurant interior commissions. I would love to continue travelling.

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out and about

COURSES AND EVENTS COMING UP

1 DRAW WITH EMBROIDERY

On this two-day in-person workshop at Hand & Lock's London base, Richard McVetis, a Royal College of Art graduate and tutor, will help you explore the potential of stitch as a method of mark-making and drawing. Create textures and patterns; work a stitch in different threads changing its scale and spacing; work freely and combine stitches to mark, make and draw. Richard will demonstrate how this can be achieved using the simplest hand-embroidery techniques. 21 & 22 January £250 HANDEMBROIDERYSHOP.COM

2 BE A SWEETIE

The Royal School of Needlework is offering an inspiring selection of live online courses. The stumpwork candy course promises to transport you back in time to recreate iconic sweets from your childhood using the stumpwork technique. 4 & 11 February (two three-hour online courses) ROYAL-NEEDLEWORK.ORG.UK

3 CREATE PICTURES WITH YOUR MACHINE

Linda Miller is a professional embroiderer with a delightfully whimsical style who teaches in the UK, Europe and the USA. Linda will show you how to use an inspiring array of threads and your own sewing machine to create pictures for a jewellery item or embroidered embellishment. 6 February £137 WESTDEAN.ORG.UK

4 MAKE A MEDIEVAL CASKET

Medieval caskets have richly ornamental surfaces, mixing patinas. These will be the inspiration to create a small stitched casket on Janet Edmonds' course. Students will need to have a working knowledge of their sewing machine and basic free machining. 11 & 12 February, non-residential £260; residential £351 MISSENDENSCHOOLOFCREATIVEARTS.CO.UK

5 TRY PUNCH NEEDLE

Branch out and try something new with this half-day punch needle workshop. Create wonderful carpet-like cushions and wallhangings. Included are: a six-inch embroidery hoop; 5mm wooden punch needle tool; a piece of 'monks cloth'; a selection of yarns; tea, coffee and biscuits; and 10% off in the shop on the day of your workshop. 21 January 10am-1pm £65 GILLIANGLADRAG.CO.UK

6 GET INSPIRED BY METAL THREADWORK

The Embroiderers' Guild has a wealth of online Thread Talks to inspire you. On 31 January 7pm–8.30pm meet Hanny Newton, who works with interior designers and art consultancies, applying her contemporary metal thread work to large scale projects for hotels and private residences around the world. EMBROIDERERSGUILD.COM/TALKS-WORKSHOPS

7 MEET MR X STITCH

On 16 February 7pm–8pm be inspired by Jamie Chalmers, aka Mr X Stitch, who took up cross stitching 15 years ago and has never looked back. He looks at how modern textile art is used to explore topics like gender, race and social politics. EMBROIDERERSGUILD.COM/TALKS-WORKSHOPS

8 EMBROIDER YOUR FUTURE

This three-session course with Elnaz Yazdani is suitable for complete beginners as well as those with some embroidery experience. It would be perfect for anyone looking to study art/textiles, gain a new hobby, find well-being through craft or just try something completely different. 29 January, 26 February and 12 March EMBROIDERERSGUILD.COM/ACTIVITIES/

9 EXPLORE POETRY AND PROSE

Textile Tours of Paris offers guided tours of the haberdasheries and flea-markets of Paris, as well as online courses and talks. Stitches and Stanzas is a beginners' course taking a relaxed look at the pleasure of embroidering poetry and prose. Rebecca will show you how to choose your fabric and thread, transfer your text by hand or using the magic of Solufix and how to use back stitch. 5, 12, 19, 26 February and 5 March 5pm–6pm €100 TEXTILETOURSOFPARIS.COM

10 LEARN SASHIKO

Sashiko has been used since the Edo era in Japan to reinforce or repair worn out garments. Join the V&A's visible mending workshops and learn how to use this traditional technique in a contemporary way with Hannah Porter from Restoration London. Take along a garment to fix, or use one of their patches to practice on, perfecting your running stitches into beautiful, visible works of art on your best-loved clothes. 25 February £45 VAM.AC.UK

11 SEW A JOURNAL COVER

Perfect your hand-embroidery skills while creating a beautiful floral design on this two-session course, before applying it to an A5 plain journal. 12 February 10am-4pm and 22 February 6pm-9pm £105 BRISTOLSEWINGSCHOOL.CO.UK

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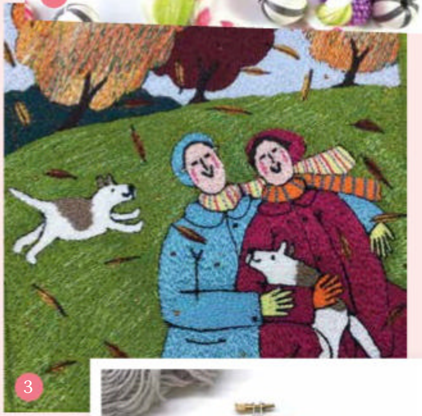
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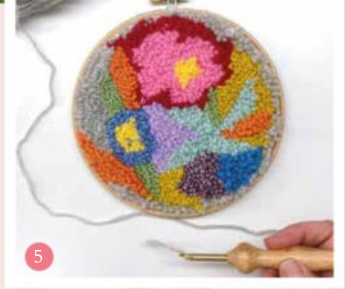
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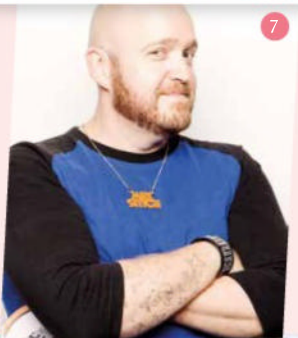
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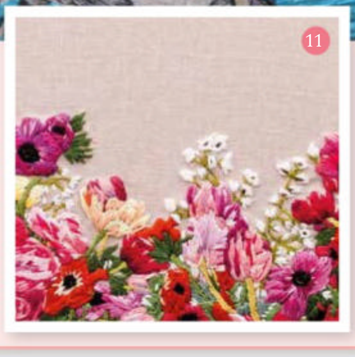
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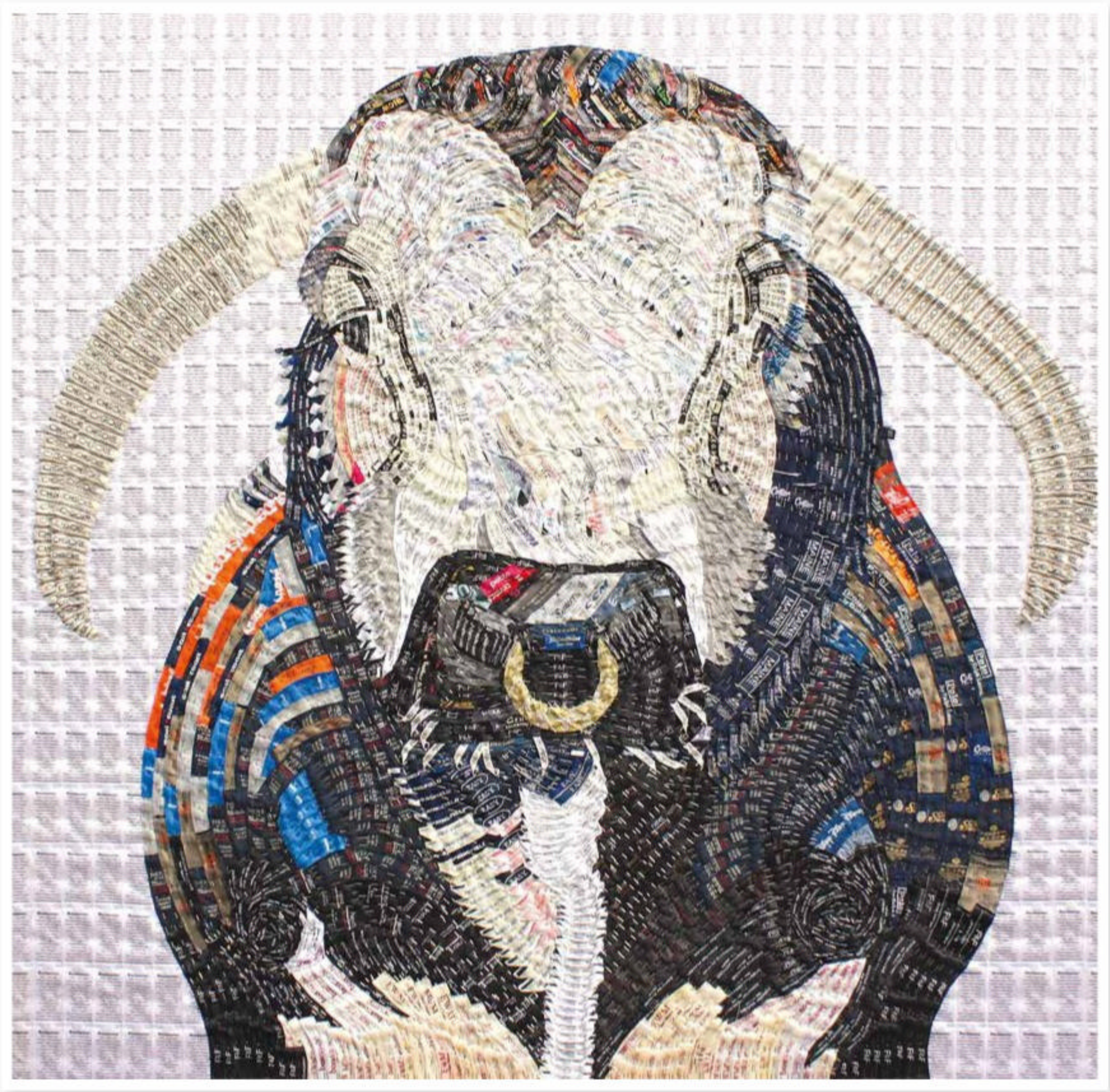
profile

our ‘label culture’ is leading us by the nose

What’s in a name? Or, rather, what’s in a label?
For fine artist Joy Pitts, quite a lot.



Joy Pitts creates artworks from recycled woven clothes labels and dressmakers' pins, a unique and quirky occupation that has garnered press attention and awards. It all began with the garments themselves: 'I was just mesmerised with materials, and dissecting garments and destroying them. I don't really know why. I was left with lots of labels and thought 'what can I do with these' so ended up sticking them on a Tesco shopping bag and entering *Shopping Bag* into the Slug and Lettuce Bar Culture competition.

It won the local prize and the national prize [in 2003].' Like much of Joy's art, it's a thought-provoking comment on our throwaway society.

Joy was a mature student when she gained an MA in fine art in 2005. Advised against art school by her parents, she went into the Civil Service, first Land Registry and then HMRC. Caring for her family while working part-time, art was always in the background, so when her children started school she completed short courses with The Open College of the Arts, then did a BA at university. For her final master's project, she constructed a remarkable bishop's cope out of 10,000 used labels, glued together.

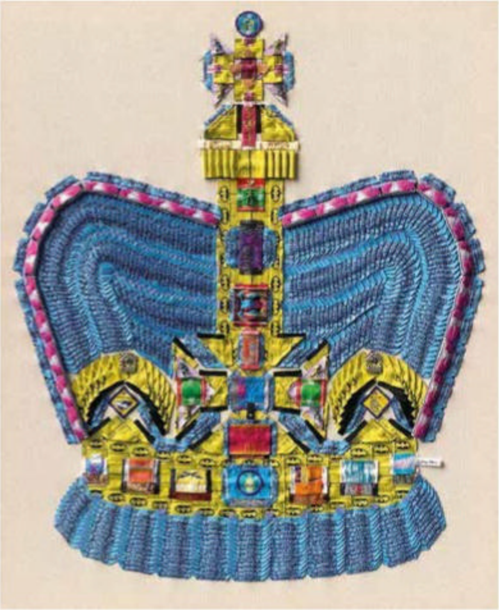
Fast-forward to 2018 and Joy was in the enviable position of having Grayson Perry select her work for the Royal Academy's 250th summer exhibition. 'His gallery was bright yellow and my work looked superb.' Joy went home and painted her gallery, Joy-next-the-Sea on the historic High Street in Wells-next-the-Sea, bright yellow too. It's a welcoming space with two full-length bow windows. The workroom in the gallery, as in her attic sewing room at home, has a countertop with thousands of labels stored beneath. In boxes marked red, white and black… labels are subdivided by size and indexed. 'I do like repetition and order,' says Joy, although her process starts in the chaos of a bag of rags at a charity shop. Rags are the items that are soiled or damaged and so aren't saleable, but stock is dwindling, perhaps saying something about our reduce-reuse-recycle credentials (or our purses). Sorting through these is not for the faint-hearted, but local charity shops are accustomed to Joy's requests to check out the back room for the old-fashioned woven label that denotes quality. When artworks require specific names, she will order a woven batch, but during lockdowns she bought a sewing machine to monogram label cloths. When the tiny labels were dragged down into the machine she managed to rectify the situation by first fixing them on tracing paper. That problem solved, Joy got on with the task in hand, which was her artwork *471 Gems*. In the guise of the Queen's gem-laden crown, Joy used 471 labels bearing the names of Covid-19 lockdown workers from the Erewash borough in Derbyshire. It took time to collect the names, but the piece is now on show at Royal Derby Hospital (currently Covid restrictions are in place).

Included in the corona are a diamanté belt buckle and even a gold button found down the back of a settee in Ireland, gifted to her during lockdowns. On closer inspection you will find nine toy soldiers and four scouting badges. 'The toy soldiers remind us of heroes fighting on the front line. The promise and friendship badges represent the kindness, help and support given by many in these difficult times.'

Joy rarely uses stitch, preferring to use dressmakers' pins. They reference the process of making and add much to the interpretation of her work, although pinning can be painful on the fingertips.

On first sight, Joy's artworks speak of the subject – ice creams, a bull-horse hybrid, bees, Zandra Rhodes, her favourite artist Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* – but as viewers move closer, the names on the labels become legible, at which point many exclaim 'Wow!' She is often asked how long each artwork takes: the answer is about three to four months – neatly storing labels cuts down making time. The largest works can get is 1.2-metres, to allow access both sides for pinning. 'The labels overlap and that's how I create rhythm, and flow, like the skin on a portrait. If I can't get into a rhythm I'll be scratching my head.'

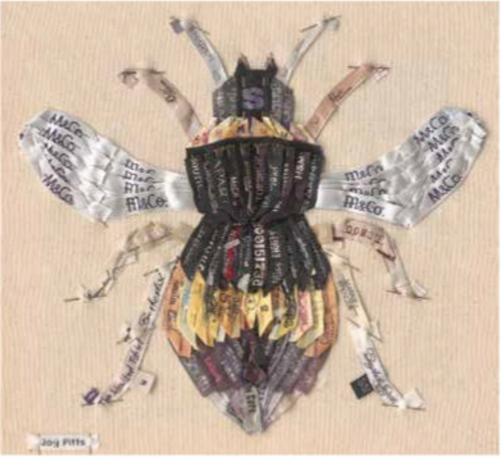
For Ayrshire *Red Cow*, five years elapsed before she had the 10,000 labels needed. In another portrait, she delineated butcher's cuts on a beef cow but inserted an equine head to highlight the horse meat scandal. A portrait of the Queen includes names of fallen servicemen, inspired by the Queen's Christmas Broadcast in 2014 when she spoke of the 1914 informal truce in the trenches. Through clothing and name labels, pinned in place or, perhaps, 'pinned down' the artist references all the other labels placed on us in society, as well as our culture of waste.



Opposite page: *Rochester*, a British longhorn bull, for which 5,000 clothing labels were used

Above: *471 Gems* now on show at Royal Derby Hospital

Below: *Yellow Bee* made from a collection of fashion labels



Commissions have come from Liberty's former MD, Ed Burstell, Sir Paul Smith, and a couple who wanted to mark their New Year's Day skinny dip.

I'm racking my brains to think of others creating art in this way, but the artist says: 'I'm one of those people who's not really influenced by fashion. I just do it my way.' Joy was flummoxed to discover only recently her mum had a job as a tabber in a factory sewing labels into garments.

Claire Waring

***471 Gems*, Royal Derby Hospital until April (Covid restrictions apply). Joy-next-the-Sea is part of Norfolk Open Studios 27 May-4 June.**

JOYPITTS.CO.UK

INSTAGRAM @JOYNEXTTHESEA

ON THE **SIDE** OF THE **ANGELS**

Masterpiece Tobias and the Angel *has evoked some interesting responses from artists participating in Oriel Davies Gallery's exhibition*

Every year, the National Gallery partners with organisations across the UK to ensure that everyone in Britain can engage with their collection. Partner organisations like public art gallery Oriel Davies in Newtown, Powys, offer new ways for audiences to engage with these paintings. Already making a splash at the gallery is *Tobias and the Angel*, painted as an altarpiece around 1470-1475 and attributed to the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio.

A Deeper Understanding: Responding to Tobias and the Angel sees six artists and one further artist-partnership explore well-being, reflection and contemplation in relation to this masterpiece.

Cecile Johnson Soliz is a sculptor using a variety of materials, including fabrics. She connects to the details of the work, such as the sash and the sandal straps: 'Looking at *Tobias and the Angel*, I am drawn to the intertwined hands and arms of both figures, the black cord that ties the cape of the angel, the belts, sandals and boots, rolled up sleeves, the curly hair of each and the flowing movement and rhythm of the garments.

'I enjoy seeing how the angel tied their cape and laced their sandals and [with] Tobias, the belt and boots and how they threw their capes over their shoulders. These gestures are so familiar and make me feel an affinity with aspects of daily life in Verrocchio's time.'

'My sculpture does not look like people, clothing or the landscape. I try to talk about people without representing them. I use processes and gestures like gathering up, bunching together and tying (and many more) as a way of talking about things we do. You can see these in Verrocchio's painting too. I like keeping things close-to-hand as it's a link to people and daily life. I try to find beauty in the simplest of things.'

Another exhibiting artist is Jacqui Poncelet, whose work is difficult to categorise, although she says her personal passion is for pattern and colour. 'I do not have a minimalist aesthetic. I believe that complexity can enrich our lives but should not overwhelm us.'

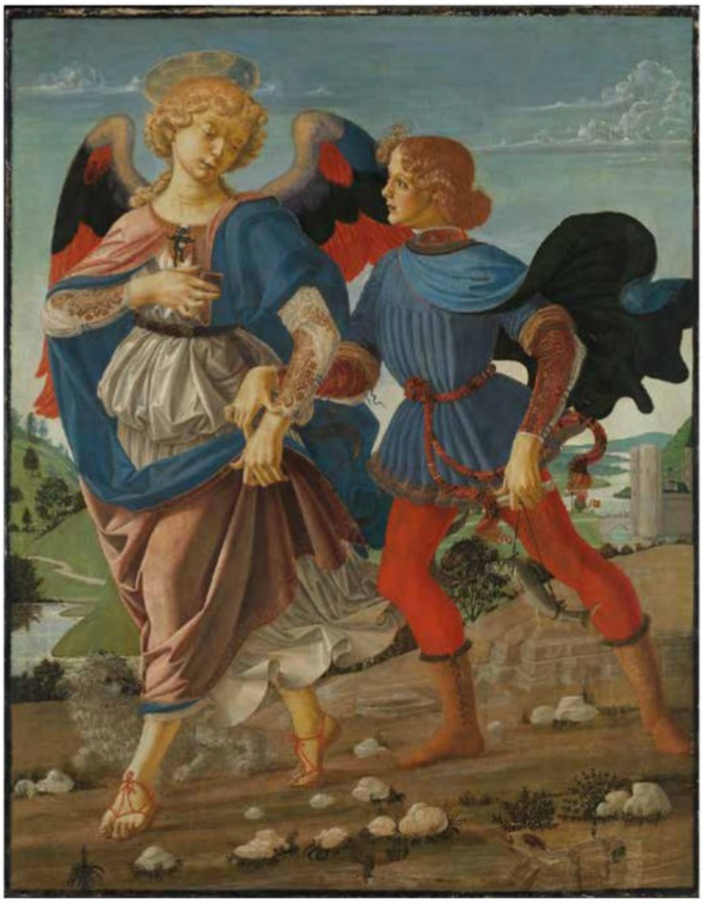
Oriel Davies Gallery commissioned a wall piece from Jacqui which evokes the rhythm of the painting. 'When Steffan Jones-Hughes invited me to respond to *Tobias and the Angel* by Verrocchio, I visited the National Gallery in London to see the painting in person.

There are often qualities of scale, surface and pigment that cannot be found in any reproduction. I wanted to discover my response in relation to the original work. There were many things that I was attracted to. I chose to focus on the interplay of colour and the 'dancing' relationship of the figures' hands within the work,' explains the artist.

'For some years I have been a regular visitor to Wales; to the countryside around Ogmore Vale where my partner lives. When I first started to spend long periods of time there, I could not stop painting the colour relationships I found in the landscape. I saw these same hues again in Verrocchio's painting so I proposed showing some of these at Oriel Davies, specifically, choosing paintings that might read something like colour samples, a palette from which to recreate *Tobias and the Angel*.

'I then created a new work, a wallpaper design from two wooden mannequin hands: one hand much larger than the other, both tentatively reaching out to touch each other. While they are nothing like the hands Verrocchio painted, I hope they have a similar tenderness.'

A Deeper Understanding: Responding to Tobias and the Angel is at Oriel Davies Gallery, Newtown, Powys SY16 2NZ until 5 March.
ORIELDAVIES.ORG

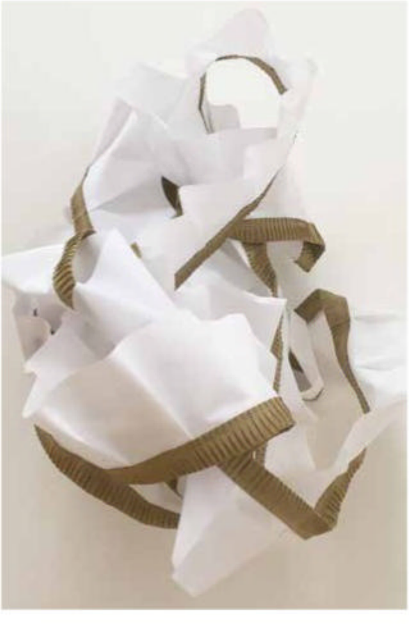


Above: The exhibition at Oriel Davis Gallery sees six artists and one artist-partnership show their responses to the stunning masterpiece *Tobias and the Angel*, by the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio, in tempera on wood, a piece touring from the National Gallery in London

NG781 WORKSHOP OF ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO, TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL, ABOUT 1470-5. BOUGHT, 1867. TEMPERA ON WOOD. PICTURE DIMS (H X W): 83.6 Đ 66 CM (C) THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

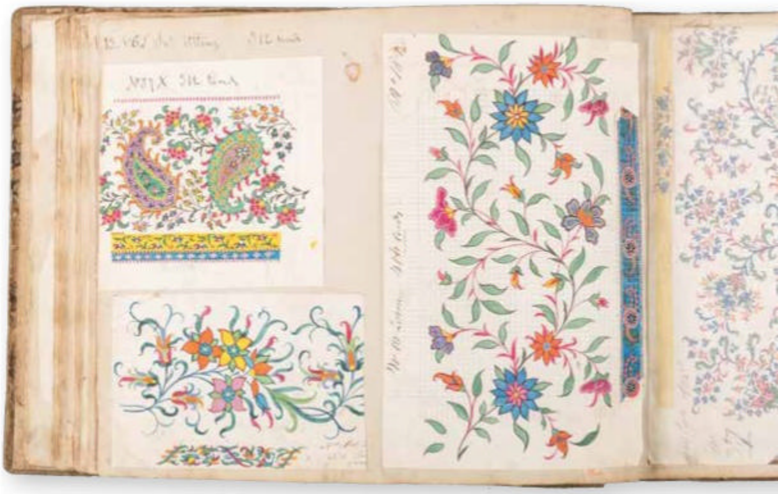
Below: Sculptor Cecile Johnson Soliz responded to the clothing in the artwork, finding familiarities in the painting to focus on. *Folds* is in corrugated cardboard and fabric, 2022

CECILE JOHNSON SOLIZ

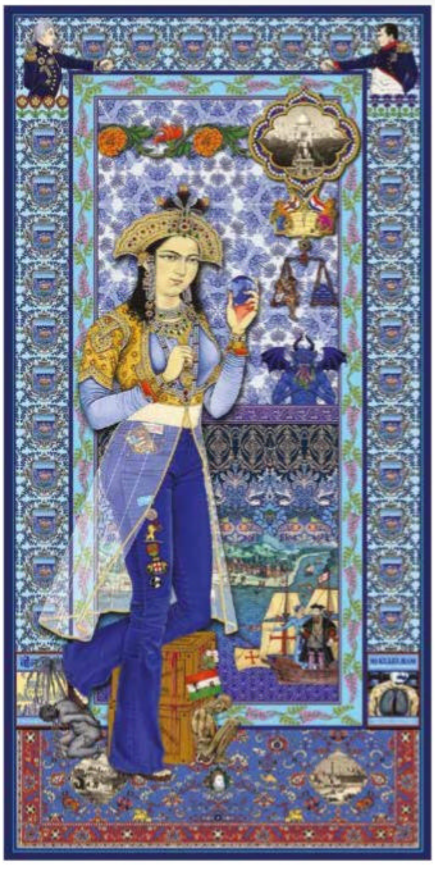


The Singh Twins: *Slaves of Fashion*

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery and East Gallery, Norwich University of the Arts (NUA)
October 2022 - 22 January 2023



Above: An 1830s pattern book containing watercolour designs for shawls. From the late 18th century, Norwich was known for its imitation Indian shawls but lost out to Paisley in Scotland for the naming of the pine cone motif in paisley designs. Norfolk Museums Service (Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery)



Left: *Indigo: The Colour of India* by The Singh Twins, 2017. Mumtaz Mahal, wife of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, sports a pair of denim jeans, referencing Agra's past as a centre for indigo

■ LUMINOUS, UNSETTLING, BEAUTIFUL and thought-provoking: The Singh Twins' exhibition, Slaves of Fashion is now showing at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery and East Gallery, Norwich University of the Arts until 22 January. This two-centred exhibition explores contemporary debates, interweaving themes of Empire, slavery, conflict and consumerism with European connections to India's historical trade in textiles. The two city-centre locations allow the internationally renowned British-Asian sister artists to display large-scale triptych artworks, as well as accompanying archival materials which inform their meticulous research.

Visitors to the Norwich Castle Museum galleries are greeted by eleven exquisitely detailed full-length portraits. Their dark themes are presented in such a way that viewers are at first drawn to the beauty and delicacy of the Indian fabrics and designs. As the eye absorbs the finer details within these luminous images of symbolic figures, a realisation dawns that each is in fact a hard-hitting essay in the complex relationships between Europe's colonial past with the South Asian subcontinent. The luminosity is enhanced as the hand-drawn and digital images are printed on textile, mounted in light boxes and displayed in a dark-walled gallery.

One image, *Indigo: The Colour of India*, 2017, features Mumtaz Mahal, wife of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, immortalised with the Taj Mahal at Agra. Queen Mumtaz is depicted holding an indigo globe and sporting a pair of denim jeans. Agra was once a centre for indigo production, a dyestuff that was known as 'blue gold'. In 1770, the British forced Indian farmers to grow indigo crops, contributing to the Bengal famine in which millions died. Nelson and Napoleon in navy uniforms brandish swords at each other in the upper border.

In another portrait, Catherine of Braganza, wife of King Charles II, wears a chintz gown while enjoying afternoon tea. Queen Catherine's dowry included the city of Bombay and its lucrative trading port.

Norwich Castle commissioned a new work from The Twins for their contemporary art collection, *An Alternative A-Z of Empire*, 2022, mixed media on light box, which was inspired by an 18th century jigsaw puzzle in the Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) collection, Inhabitants of The World Alphabetically Arrang'd.

The Singh Twins 'suggest that the concept of the jigsaw puzzle, a single image comprised of many separate but interlinked pieces, symbolically represent the nature of colonial history as a global story; individual but interconnected narratives shaped by different experience and viewpoints.' Within the new artwork, 'D is for Duleep' refers to Maharaja Duleep Singh, the last ruler of the Sikh Kingdom, deposed as a child and brought to Britain. The Maharaja's estate at Elveden, Norfolk, is a place of pilgrimage for Punjabi Sikhs.

Displayed with The Twins' artworks, are selected textiles and objects from the NMS collections. A hand-printed and -painted kalamkari (*kalam* means pen, *kari* is work) quilt or curtain, c.1700, refers to the Twins' *Coromandel: Sugar and Spice, Not So Nice*. This luxury quilt/curtain makes a connection with 18th century Dutch textile trade profits, which helped fund colonial slave plantations in the Americas.

From the late 18th century, Norwich was known for its woven imitation Indian shawls. A Norwich pattern book, dating from the 1830s, illustrates hand-drawn examples of the pine cone motif, known as *ambi* in Punjabi, with origins in the Persian *'boteh'*. Today, it is widely recognised as 'paisley', named after the Scottish shawl weaving town that competed with Norwich.

The Singh Twins' artworks are thoughtful and thought-provoking, full of complexities that require time to absorb. Visitors to the show should allow plenty of time – and ideally plan more than one visit - to take in this fascinating and stimulating exhibition. Prepare to embark on an emotional journey; know that you will be challenged, delighted, appalled and illuminated. The Singh Twins' artworks are a glowing example of the way in which works of art can challenge popular misconceptions and change the way we view the world around us.

Dr Pippa Lacey

MUSEUMS.NORFOLK.GOV.UK/NORWICH-CASTLE AND NUA.AC.UK

THE ART OF WAR

Anastasiia Podervianska describes how
hard life is in Kyiv, Ukraine, but says she is
determined to force herself to keep creating art

■ WHEN FULL-SCALE WAR broke out in Ukraine on February 24 2022, international artist Anastasiia Podervianska needed to make a quick decision about her family's safety. She decided to move on from the capital Kyiv, where she was born and raised, and transfer her family to the west of the country, where they lived for two months. She found it was an impossible time to create art but then luckily she was offered an artist's residency in the USA over the summer. 'It was a very calm time,' the artist remembers. The residency was at Martha MOCA, where she lived with her son for two months in safety, without the constant air alarms of her home city. Here, she created a series of works on the theme of the war in Ukraine. *Borodyanka and Mariupol*, *Irpin* and *School* are some of the works in this series. The images were recreated from photographs showing destroyed buildings after massive air missile strikes by the Russians.

The textile panel *Borodyanka and Mariupol, pictured,* has been selected for the 7th Riga International Textile and Fibre Art Triennial Tradition and Innovation which has the theme: Quo Vadis? and starts this summer. For Anastasiia, these works were the culmination of a nightmare situation. Now she and her family are back in Kyiv.

'Everyone who stayed here is trying to live as normal, but this is often very hard. We live while air alarms sound and rockets attack Kyiv, while the daily news brings us information of more shelling and loss of life across our country,' reports Anastasiia.

Artists who remain are still trying to create work. Anastasiia says: 'Our whole country is working to defeat the enemy. Ukrainian artists are trying to voice their opinion about this war through their work, organising exhibitions and auctions in support of our army.'

Air Alarm Map is a woven work (*See From the editor, page 4*). Anastasiia explains: 'This is the "bloody" map of Ukraine. We see this map in Messenger when the air alarm sounds. The map shows where there is a great threat to life, where active hostilities are taking place. Often the whole map is red, only the still occupied Crimea remains white. Everything inside me freezes and stops for a moment when I hear the sound of a siren.'

Anastasiia's artworks speak to the viewer with vivid images, symbols and signs. Destroyed cities, schools, theatres and residential buildings have already become landmarks that are easily recognisable: a destroyed music school in Borodyanka, or an apartment block, or entire residential districts in Mariupol, burntout by Russian air bombs. Anastasiia says: 'Russia continues to destroy our country and kill its inhabitants. This means great pain and suffering for every Ukrainian.'

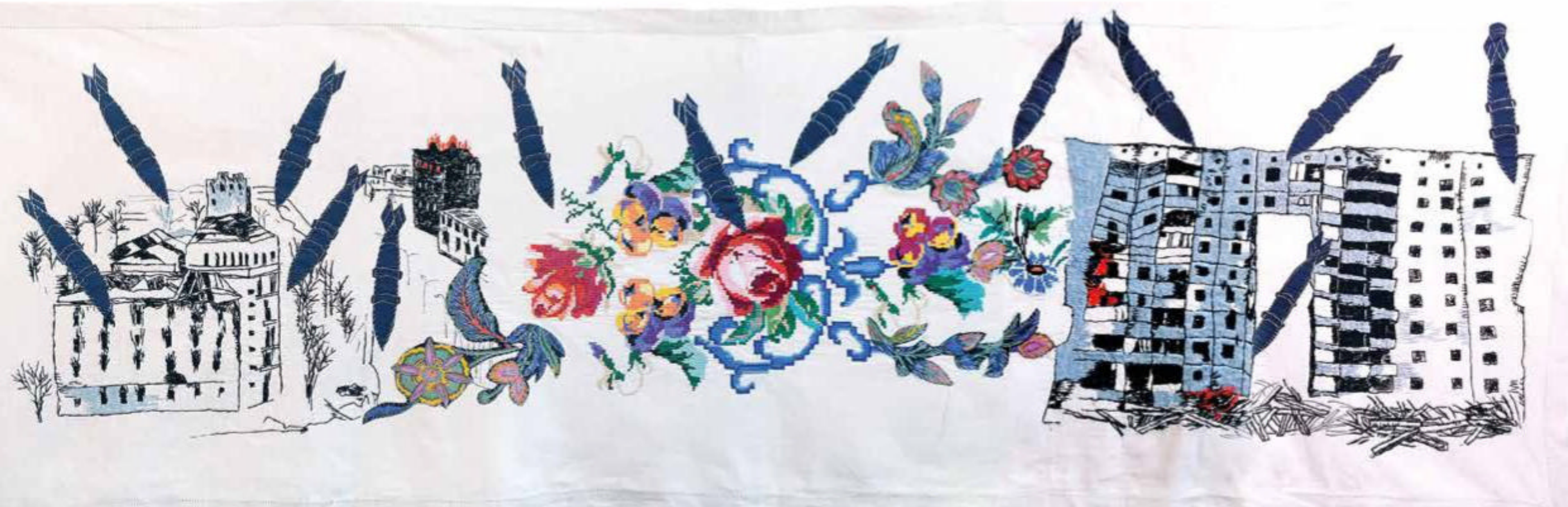
Even before full-scale war in Ukraine, Anastasiia sought to undermine the stereotype of textiles as a decorative and applied medium for women's handiwork, by using it as a medium for contemporary art. Anastasiia says: 'I create sophisticated and multilayered visuals by combining various techniques. My textile panels are stitched together from patches of embroidered towels and hand-stitched lacework or handkerchiefs. Artworks contain elements of collage, brocade insets and other details. I love working with textiles because they are multifaceted, always unpredictable. Textiles constantly open up new opportunities for creativity. I always try to create original series that are dissimilar to the previous ones.'

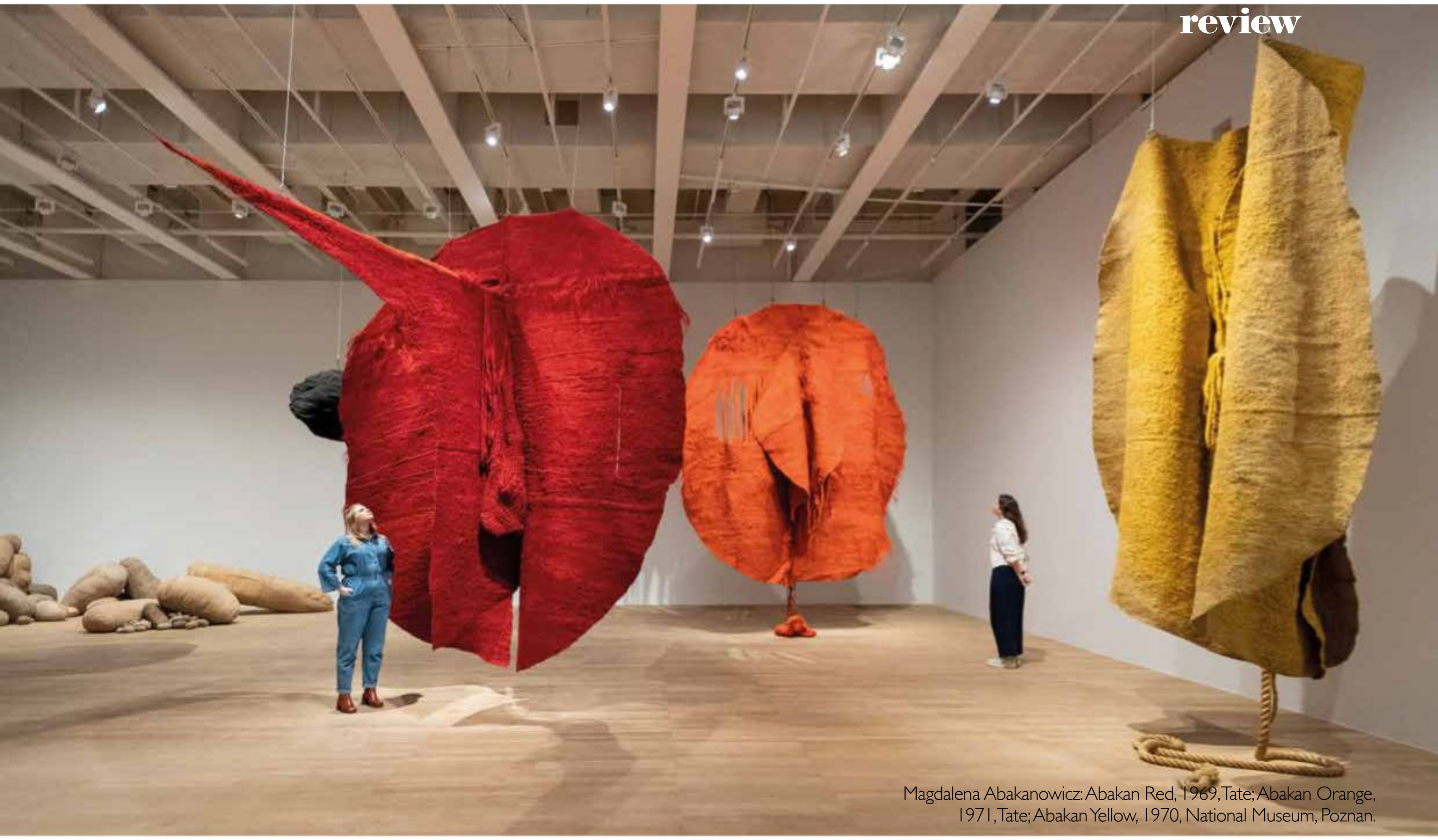
'Participating in international biennials and triennials provides an opportunity for me to meet artists from around the world and get to know their work. I can also present my work there as something new in this field.'

Anastasiia Podervianska's artwork has featured in more than 20 solo and 50 group exhibitions. She is represented in private and museum collections in Ukraine, Germany, Poland and the USA and is a member of the Artist's Union of Ukraine and Fiber Art Fever. Born in 1978, she is a graduate of the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture, Kyiv.

The 7th Riga International Textile and Fibre Art Triennial Tradition and Innovation which has the theme: Quo Vadis? runs from June 15 – 17 September 2023, at the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design and at the Art Museum Riga Bourse in Riga, Latvia.

INSTAGRAM @ANASTASIIA_PODERVIANSKA





Magdalena Abakanowicz: Abakan Red, 1969, Tate; Abakan Orange, 1971, Tate; Abakan Yellow, 1970, National Museum, Poznan.

ALL WORKS BY MAGDALENA ABAKANOWICZ ARE © FUNDACJA MARTY MAGDALENY ABAKANOWICZ KOSMOWSKIEJ I JANA KOSMOWSKIEGO, WARSAW

Magdalena Abakanowicz
Every Tangle Of Thread And Rope

Tate Modern, London *17 November 2022 – 21 May 2023*

■ THE TATE MODERN GALLERY has taken some of its most impressive textile art out of their cupboards for the exhibition Magdalena Abakanowicz: Every Tangle Of Thread And Rope. It's even more impressive when you realise the bulk of the work in this big exhibition covers just a few years of Abakanowicz's practice, from 1967 to 1971. Magdalena Abakanowicz (1930-2017) disliked the use of the words 'fibre art' to describe her work. Yet those words describe so well her series of monumental fibre pieces known as Abakans, 26 of which are at the heart of this show. Horsehair, sisal, hemp and rope are woven together into heavy organic shapes and hung throughout the gallery. Their dark, slumberous colours are shown off to advantage by the brown walls the Tate have chosen to hang them against.

The curators of the exhibition –Ann Coxon and Mary Jane Jacob – fought for the free flow of visitors among the work, as Abakanowicz was passionate about her work being seen and experienced as living works of art. So, in Every Tangle Of Thread And Rope you can get close enough to the work to admire the craft and to smell the earthy materials; such a rare treat in a textile exhibition.

The exhibition starts with Abakanowicz's painted textiles, weavings and actual paintings, from the mid 1950s up to 1964, when she first named her Abakans. As the co-curator of the exhibition, Ann Coxon explains this period shows us: 'the dissolution of the rectangle' in Abakanowicz's work. Her earlier fibre artworks were more traditional in form, wall-based but with threads beginning to unravel and move. She designed fibre works for manufacture during this time, too, some of which, *Helena*, 1964, and *Desdemona*, 1965, from her series on mythological women, are in the show.

Abakanowicz was born in Falenty, Poland, in 1930 and lived and worked there, behind the Iron Curtain, nearly all of her life. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Art, Warsaw, in 1954, having studied painting and weaving but always had a tangled relationship with weaving and definitions. In the (very nice) catalogue for the exhibition the artist writes: 'I like neither rules nor instructions, these enemies of imagination. I make use of the technique of weaving by adapting it to my own ideas. My art has always been a protest against what I have met with in weaving.'

By 1962 Abakanowicz was recognised outside Poland when she took part in the 1st International Tapestry Biennial in Lausanne. By the 1970s she was making larger, off-the-wall environmental installations all over the world.

The significance of this current exhibition lies in the fact that it comes 50 years after Abakanowicz's first exhibition, held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1975. This Tate exhibition has been a long time in the making, yet her work remains visceral and relevant. For those who saw and loved the Anni Albers exhibition at Tate Modern, the Abakanowicz is as good as that. Different, yes, but equally essential viewing.

Jane Audas

what's on

On show

ABERDEEN Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open until 5 March. Aberdeen Art Gallery, Schoolhill, AB10 1FQ. aberdeencity.gov.uk/AAGM

BATH Threads Through Creation: Jacqui Parkinson 7 January-19 March. Bath Abbey, Kingston Buildings BA1 1LT. bathabbey.org

BIRKENHEAD Michael Brennand-Wood's Lace Works: The Encirclement of Space 18 January-18 March. Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, Slatey Road, Merseyside CH43 4UE. williamsonartgallery.org

BIRMINGHAM Grayson's Art Club: The Exhibition III (free but booking online is essential) until 16 April. Midland Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park, B12 9QH. macbirmingham.co.uk

BOVEY TRACEY Maker Showcase: Kate Toms (3D sculptural pieces) until 28 January. MAKE Southwest, Riverside Mill, Devon TQ13 9AF. crafts.org.uk

BRISTOL Looking to the Light (exploring the history of mental healthcare) until 29 January. Glenside Hospital Museum, The Church, UWE Glenside Campus, Blackberry Hill BS16 1DD. Open Wednesdays 10am-1pm and Saturdays 10am-4pm. glensidemuseum.org.uk

BRISTOL Rosemary Mayer: Ways of Attaching until 15 January. Spike Island, 133 Cumberland Road BS1 6UX. spikeisland.org.uk

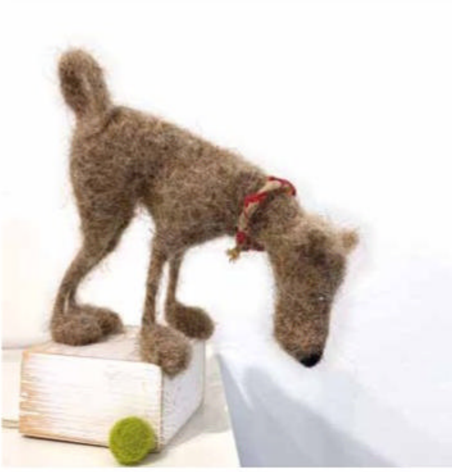
CARLISLE Lynn Dennison's costume sculptures until 31 January. Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Castle Street, Cumbria, CA3 8TP. tulliehouse.co.uk

EDINBURGH Knitwear: Chanel to Westwood until 11 March. Dovecot Studios Ltd, 10 Infirmary Street EH1 1LT dovecotstudios.com

FARNHAM Dancing in the Womb: Rezia Wahid 10 January-13 May. Falkner Rd, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7DS. csc.uca.ac.uk

GATESHEAD Hew Locke's The Procession 18 February-11 June. BALTIC Gateshead, NE8 3BA. baltic.art

HIDCOTE Colour with Kaffe until 25 March. Hidcote Bartrim, Near Chipping Sodbury, Gloucester. GL55 6LR. nationaltrust.org.uk/hidcote



Tiny Dog by Kate Toms, MAKE Southwest, Bovey Tracey

KIDDERMINSTER Industrial Bobbins (Wolverhampton Creative Embroiderers take inspiration from a Wilton carpet loom industrial bobbin) until January 31. The Museum of Carpet, Stour Vale Mill, Green Street, DY10 1AZ. museumofcarpet.org

LIVERPOOL Turner Prize 2022 until 19 March. Tate Liverpool, Royal Albert Dock L3 4BB. tate.org.uk

LONDON Africa Fashion until 16 April. *Plus*, Hallyu! The Korean Wave until 25 June and Beguiling Beni (the Japanese dye 'beni') until 31 March. V&A Museum, Cromwell Road SW7 2RL. vam.ac.uk

LONDON A Girl's Education in Stitch until 18 May. Royal School of Needlework studios, Hampton Court Palace KT8 9AU. *Selected dates only*. www.royal-needlework.org.uk

LONDON Cotton: Labour, Land and Body Until 4 March. Crafts Council Gallery, 44A Pentonville Road N1 9BY craftscouncil.org.uk

LONDON Kaffe Fassett: The Power of Pattern until 12 March; *plus* Andy Warhol: The Textiles 31 March-10 September. Fashion and Textile Museum, 83 Bermondsey Street, SE1 3XF fashionandtextilemuseum.org

LONDON Magdalena Abakanowicz: Every Tangle of Thread and Rope until 21 May. *Plus* Hyundai commission: Cecilia Vicuna until 16 April. Tate Modern, Bankside SE1 9TG. tate.org.uk

LONDON Souls Grown Deep Like the Rivers (includes Gee's Bend quilters) 17 March-18 June. Royal Academy, Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1J 0BD. royalacademy.org.uk

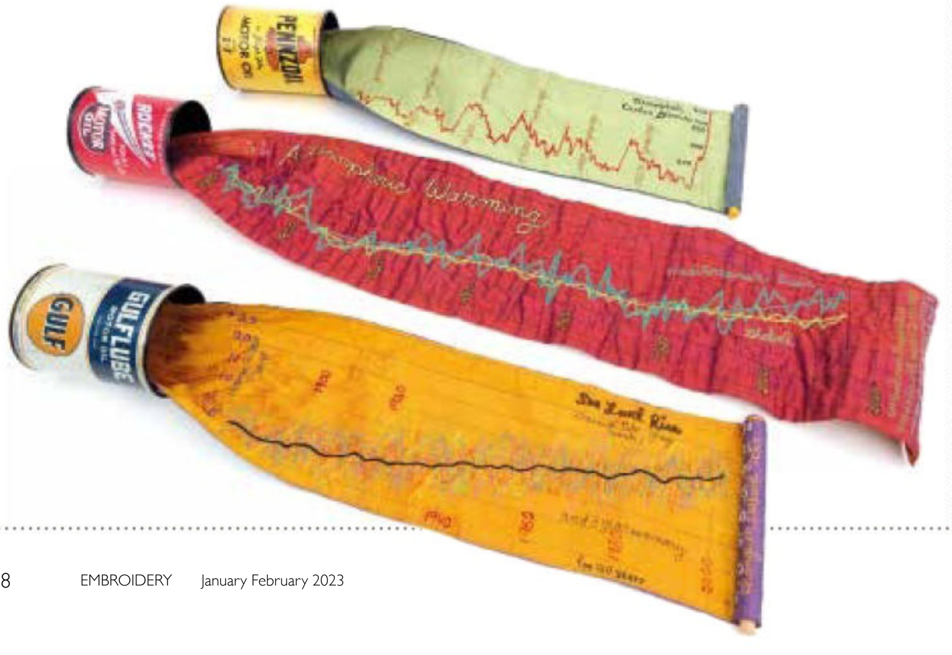
LONDON Weird Sensation: Feels Good until 10 April. Plus, Sneakers Unboxed until 9 April

Climate crisis: cans we can't kick down the road...

Bonnie Peterson's work has an urgency about it: that of climate crisis. At Notebaert Nature Museum in Chicago, USA, until 15 October, her work examines geophysical climate statistics, which she embroiders on paper or silk to produce a pictorial language we can all understand. Peterson's work originated during artist-scientist projects with limnologists at the University of Wisconsin, glaciologists at Yosemite National Park, fire scientists at Northern Arizona University, dendochronologists at University of Arizona and permafrost scientists at the University of Alaska. Data presented as visual art challenges people, regardless of their level of scientific knowledge, to consider the catastrophic climate change our planet is undergoing.

Below, the orange graph shows 120 years of Earth's ocean levels; today, sea level is 13-20cm higher on average than it was in 1900. The red graph shows atmospheric warming in the Mediterranean Basin (blue) and global (green), concentrating on the pre-industrial period (1880-1899). In the Mediterranean, average annual temperatures are 1.4 degrees Celsius higher than in 1880-1899. The green graph shows 800,000 years of CO2 in Earth's atmosphere, which comes mainly from the extraction and burning of fossil fuels.

Natural Consequences: The Geoscience Embroideries of Bonnie Peterson is at Notebaert Nature Museum in Chicago, Illinois, USA, until 15 October.



and Yinka Illori: Parables for Happiness until 25 June. Design Museum, 224-238 Kensington High St, W8 6AG. designmuseum.org

LONDON Xadie Xa: House Gods until 30 April. Whitechapel Gallery, 77-82 Whitechapel High St, E1 7QX. whitechapelgallery.org

MACCLESFIELD 200 years of Langley Printworks until 2023, Wed-Sat only. The Silk Museum, Park Lane, SK11 6TJ macclesfieldmuseums.co.uk

MANCHESTER Dandy Style until 1 May. Manchester Art Gallery, Mosley Street, M2 3JL. manchesterartgallery.org

MANCHESTER Exploration and Transformation: A stitch and mixed media exhibition by Stitchlines 8-29 January. The Old Parsonage, Stenner Lane, Didsbury M20 2RQ *Sunday viewings 10am-5pm. Other viewing times call 0161 445 7661.*

NEWTOWN A Deeper Understanding: Responding to *Tobias and the Angel* (workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio). Masterpiece loan from the National Gallery, with textile responses from Jacqui Poncelet and Cecile Johnson Soliz until 5 March. Oriel Davies, The Park, Powys SY16 2NZ. orieldavies.org

Staying in is the new going out

The idea of embroidering with crochet-weight knitting wool can raise eyebrows, but it is so therapeutic that when Victoria Merness's students try it for the first time, there are usually sounds of 'Ooh!' and 'Ahh!' rippling around the class. If you are looking for instant gratification from your embroidery, this is the one to do in front of the TV with a cup of tea to hand. Hand-dyed merino and silk wools by Manos del Uruguay, together with pure linen panels, make it a joyous experience. Victoria also teaches workshops in the Manchester and Warrington areas and the North-West. Her next workshop is at Hanging By A Thread textile studio in Warrington on 4 February.

LITTLEHOUSEOFVICTORIA.COM

RUTHIN Motive/Motif: Artists Commemorate the Suffragettes (in collaboration with Charlotte Hodes) 14 January-19 March; plus, Jeanette Orrell's An Indigo Summer 22 April-2 July. Ruthin Craft Centre, Denbighshire LL15 1BB ruthincraftcentre.org.uk

SCUNTHORPE Changing Room until 21 January. 20/21 Visual Arts Centre, Church Square, North Lincolnshire DN15 6TB 2021 visualartscentre.co.uk

SEDBURGH Once Upon a Thread: International Textiles Exhibition 11 January-19 March 2023. Plus, Exspiravit (textile works by five women artists who studied at Manchester Art School) 11 January-2 April. Farfield Mill, Garsdale Road, Cumbria, LA10 5LW. Wed-Sun only. farfieldmill.org

SELBY Serena Partridge: Artist-in-residence extending into 2023. Selby Abbey, Yorkshire YO8 4PU. selbyabbey.org.uk

SOMERTON Flock Together: collective artwork from a community sewing project 14 January-4 February. ACE Arts, Market Place, TA11 7NB. acearts.co.uk

WAKEFIELD Annie Montgomerie: Hand Me Downs until 26 February. Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, W Yorkshire WF4 4LG ysp.org.uk

Events

BIRMINGHAM Fashion and Embroidery Show 16-19 March. NEC, B40 1NT. Come and meet the friendly Embroiderers' Guild team at our stand. Enter the Madeira embroidery competition and you could win a range of prizes, *see right.* creativecraftshow.co.uk

LONDON The Stitch Festival 23-26 March. Business Design Centre, N1 0QH. thestitchfestival.co.uk

Overseas

LODZ 17th International Triennial of Lodz 2022 until 15 April. Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź, 282 Piotrkowska Street, 93-034 Poland. cmwl.pl

TORONTO Simone Elizabeth Saunders: u.n.i.t.y. until 29 January. Textile Museum of Canada, 55 Centre Avenue, Ontario, M5G 2H5 textilemuseum.ca

Opportunities

VIII International Triennial of Textile Arts 2024. Deadline period 15 Sept-15 Nov 2023. Szombathely Gallery, Hungary rb.gy/4en6ud

Prize prospect

Embroidery magazine is once again sponsoring the visitors' choice prize in the Madeira embroidery competition, offering a year's magazine subscription to the winner. Judged at the Fashion and Embroidery Show 2023, at the NEC, Birmingham, 16-19 March, the brief is on the theme of colour. There is a range of further categories and prizes. The closing date for entries is 27 January and finished items should be received by 10 February. For more details visit ichfevents/competitions

Exhibition dates may be subject to change. Many galleries insist on advance booking. Please check with the venue before making your journey.

New project Comfort aims to boost self-esteem

Breasts have long been a source of fascination and frustration, of joy and pain. A new embroidered community quilt project, called Comfort, is gathering first-hand experiences and artwork on the theme of breasts for a touring exhibition. Artist Lois Blackburn is working with a wide group of people, including breast cancer survivors, teenagers, older people, those at risk of homelessness and the trans community. Some will be stitchers already, others beginners. Comfort aims to build people's self-esteem. Kits will be available via Etsy if you can't take part in person. *Funded by National Lottery through Arts Council England.*

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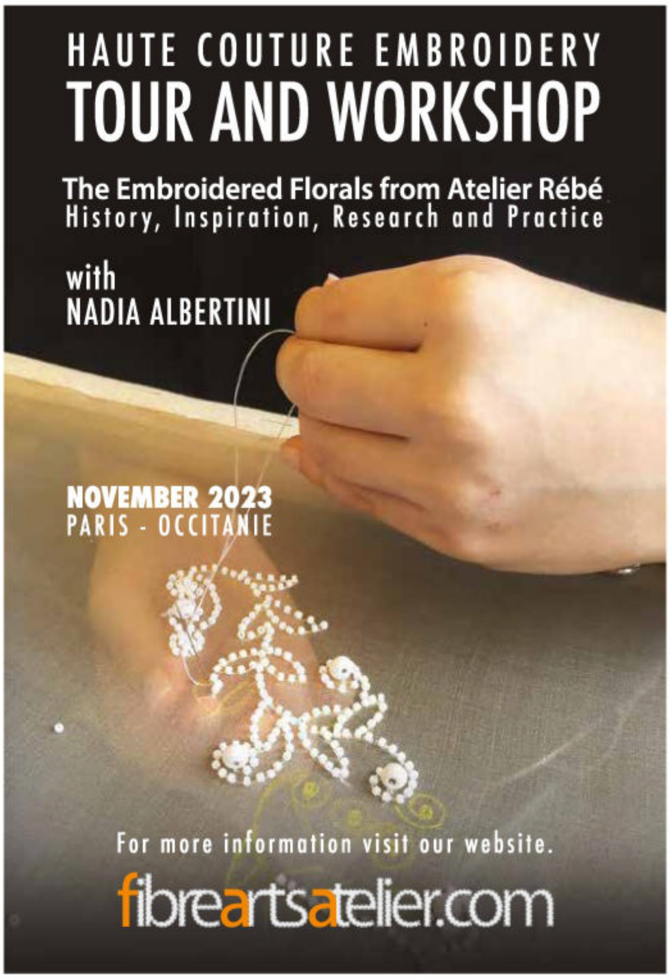

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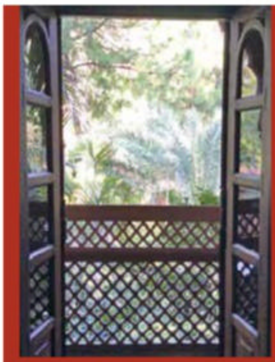

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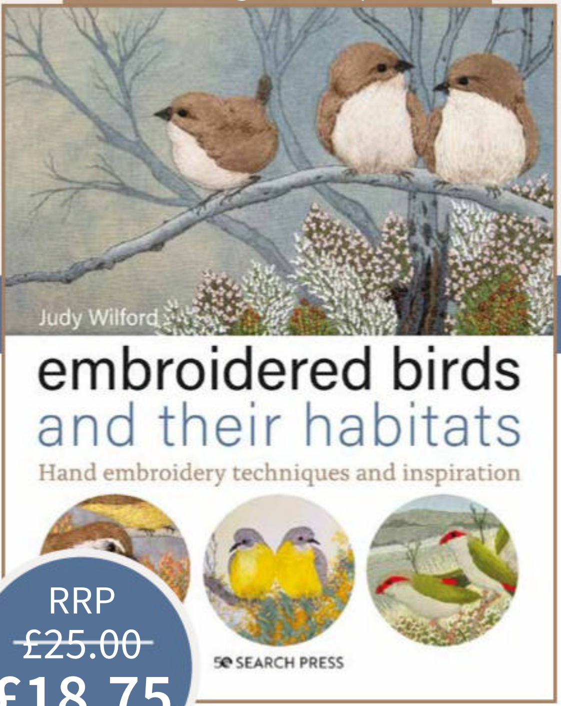
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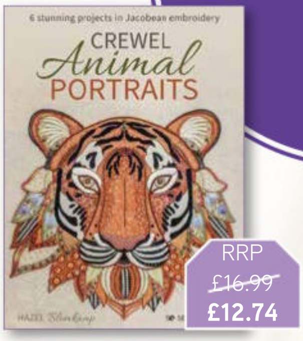
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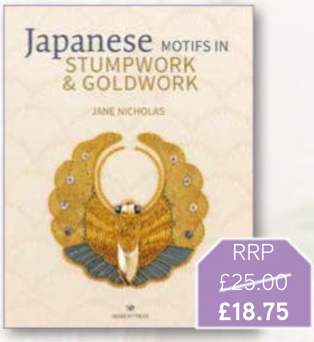
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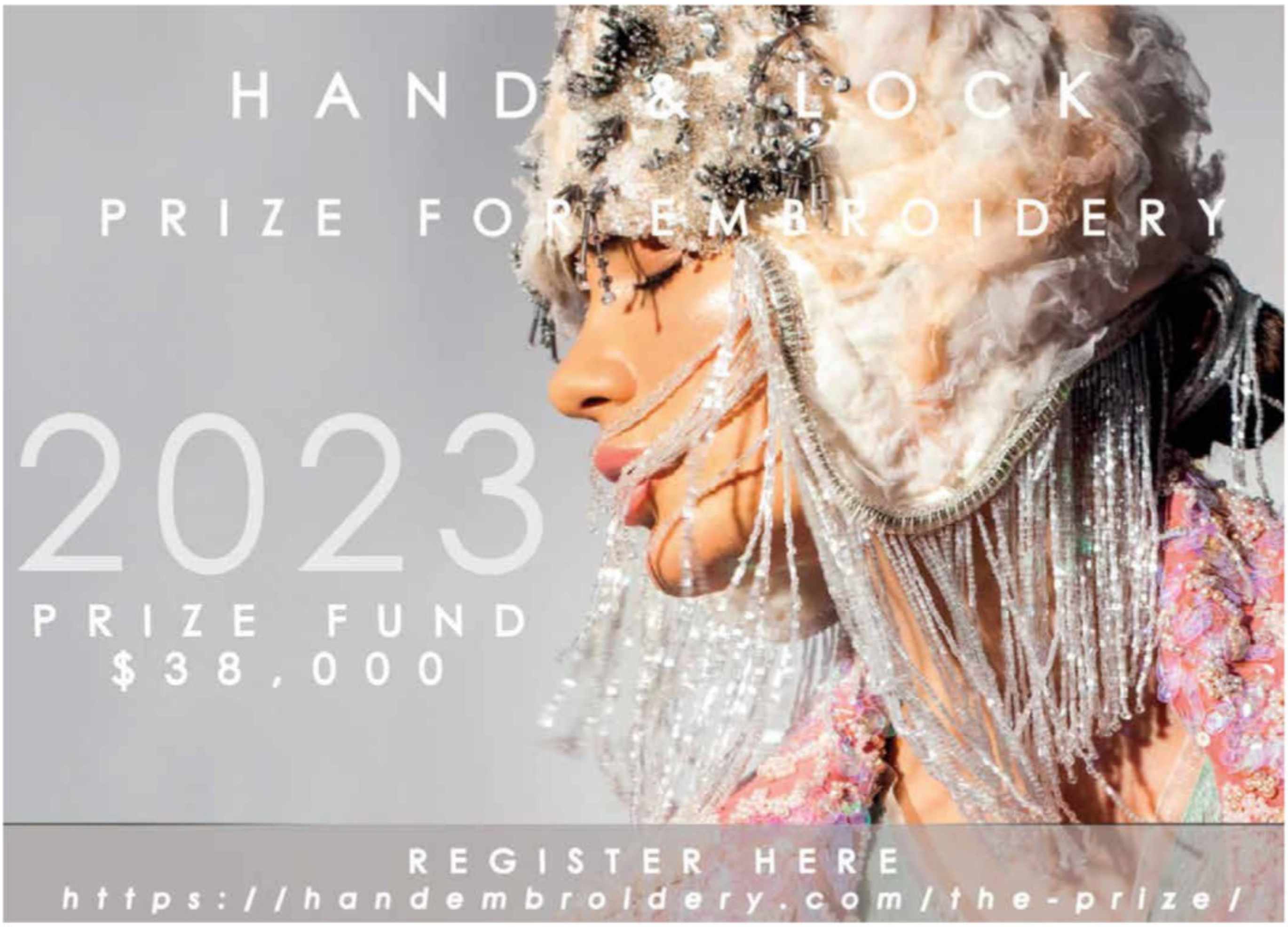

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